

SUPPLEMENT TO THE

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[WITH TWO SUPPLEMENTS, 1S.

OPENING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSION BY HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

THE second Session of Queen Victoria's fourth Parliament was opened, and by her Majesty in person, on Tuesday the 30th ult.

The real importance of that brilliant though sedate spectacle is

to be found in the fact that the head of the State was proceeding through the streets of the capital—those streets being crowded by an excited populace—to summon the State to sanction and to strengthen those measures which she had taken, upon the advice of her Ministers, but in the absence of Parliament, to resist the aggression of one of her allies upon another of her allies—

those measures leading, in all probability, to a European war, of which, once begun, no man could foresee the result. This great fact is, in our time, a new fact; and in the face of such probabilities, the Session then opened must be pronounced as transcending in importance every other session of the Parliaments called in the present reign. Even were the Russian question not in



OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.—THE NORMAN PORCH.—HER MAJESTY PROCEEDING TO THE ROBING-ROOM, PREVIOUS TO ENTERING THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

presence, there are other circumstances which would render the opening of the session of 1854 an epoch. The speech from the Throne which declared conditional war against the Czar, announced, also a Reform Bill—a measure which may produce as great gradual changes as were produced by the Bill (of which this is a complement and a continuation) of 1832—a measure from which undoubtedly we shall date in our constitutional history. We remember the reign of William IV. solely for the Reform-bill, in the passing of which he was the reluctant agent; and, whatever may be the other memorable episodes reserved by fate, it would so far appear to be certain that posterity will principally commemorate Victoria for the measures which made trade free, and the measure which struck a death-blow at the system, peculiar to our Constitution, of electors' corruption and simoniacal party representation. For still other reasons must we regard and record the initiation of the new Session with no ordinary interest. Fortunately for a people threatened with a great war, and to whom the Sovereign appeals to undertake a great struggle, the Parliament assembled on Tuesday is, in the loftiest sense, a "National Council," since it meets at a moment when "party" has for the present disappeared, if it has not been permanently destroyed; and the curious yet gratifying circumstance is noticeable that this Parliament, whom the Queen, with the national approval, has invited to "Reform" itself, is a Parliament in the first place in unusual accord with the Government, and in the next place is a Parliament in which, so far as the conduct of a war would be concerned, the people would appear to place the most unbounded—it may be said—unparalleled confidence. That is to say, we have not only a coalition Government, but a coalition House of Commons, in which—national danger impending, and national respectability (by the adoption of a Reform Bill) having to be secured—individual differences are indiscriminately suppressed. Perhaps the theory that "government by party" is the only Government applicable to a mixed Constitution like that of England may be quite sound; but at any rate it is obvious that the Ministers of Queen Victoria are not just now in face of any tangible body to be termed "Her Majesty's Opposition." That there are, and will be, varieties of opinions upon varieties of subjects, is as certain as that there are 654 members of the House of Commons. But the House of Commons is, for the present, without any of those party organisations which indicate the continuance of Government by party. We may return to the ancient ways of watching, or waiting for our freedom, and arranging our prosperity; but, for the present, the National Council is unconstitutionally unsymmetrical—there are no "sides." And such a fact is to Englishmen at such a time a subject for congratulation.

All was not, however, *couleur de rose* in the splendours of Tuesday's ceremonies. There were more people along the line of the Royal procession than have been seen on any like occasion since the Queen went to open the Crystal Palace in 1851—certainly a greater number than have attended any opening of Parliament since the inauguration of her Majesty's first Parliament.

This crowd collected partly because of national excitement in the apprehension of a great European war, but chiefly because of the prevalence of what Lord John Russell termed in the evening of the same day, an "honest delusion"—a delusion, however honest, discreditable to the sagacity and good taste of those who encouraged it. It is undoubtedly a fact that all proper precautions were taken in anticipation of a possible manifestation of unpopularity.

The whole of the Horse Guards were out—an unprecedented thing, we believe; and every available policeman that could be obtained by Sir Richard Mayne was drafted to duty along the line of the procession. There was no hissing to an extent to render such precautions necessary; and, on the other hand, there being more people than usual, there was an unusual cheering—the few hisses arousing indignant loyalty. The signs of disapprobation were very partial in the Park; but in Parliament-street they were unmistakeably evident, and the cheering which suppressed them enables the loyal to afford to admit their existence.

In other respects, the procession was as usual. The crowd, respected and "chaffed" the Guards; cheered, with ironical cheers, that special Briton, the Beef-eater; admired the horses of the Royal carriages; and wondered at the beautiful women, beautifully dressed, who, in brilliant equipages, flashed past, on their way to the Peeresses' boxes and the galleries in the House of Lords. When the carriage of the Turkish Ambassador appeared, solitary, and attracting all eyes by the peculiar livery of his servants, he was at once recognised, and, of course, heartily cheered. The scene was a complete political ovation, which will be talked about for months to come at Constantinople and by the soldiers of the army on the Danube. "Will the Russian Ambassador appear?" was a general question; but M. de Brunnow showed his tact, and stayed at home. The liveries of the French Minister were recognised, and his Excellency received a gratifying intimation that the Anglo-French alliance is a highly popular one.

The attendance at the House of Lords was both larger and earlier than usual. Long before the hour appointed for the opening of the doors, a protracted line of carriages connected the Victoria Tower with Charing-cross; and numerous ladies, wisely impatient of the delay occasioned by getting the vehicles up in turn, descended in all their full-dress glory, and made their way on foot to the humble entrance provided for them. The Royal Gallery—by which name is known the magnificent hall through which the Queen passes from the Robing-room to the House, and which is lined on each side with seats, row over row—was very soon filled; and lucky was the new arrival whose good looks, or pertinacity, procured her a seat twenty minutes after the doors were opened, though it was then nearly two hours before the Queen would arrive. Nor were the yet more favoured lady occupants of the North Gallery (that usually set apart for less interesting strangers) much later; and this "highly advantageous locality?" was speedily adorned with a goodly show of youth, beauty, and irreproachable millinery. The body of the House filled somewhat more slowly; but the numbers of Peeresses and their friends at length appeared to be much larger than ordinary, and they even entrenched upon the single marginal bench reserved for the ermine bars. The gallery to the left of the throne was also completely occupied—but that on the right was not filled. It only remains to remark, with the utmost respect, that the fair spectators, as usual, looked to far greater advantage at the opening of Parliament than at its close, and the fresh faces and healthy complexions spoke of country rides and sea breezes, rather than of the midnight mazurka and the crowded supper-room.

The Peers were late. There was a large assemblage of Judges (who clustered together in the centre of the House), and several members of the Episcopal Bench. The Ambassadors, as they arrived, did not take their places behind the Bishops, but joined in groups near the Throne, and their various uniforms and glittering decorations helped the striking picture presented by the scene. It was, of course, matter of speculation whether the Russian Ambassador would be present; and searching were the glances directed at each bedizened diplomat, to discover the representative of the Power whose misdeeds were expected to be exposed. But Baron Brunnow, if present (which we doubt), escaped observation. The Turkish Ambassador was there, and came in quite radiantly, having been tremendously cheered by the people.

The distinguished assembly seated itself, the ceremony of packing being performed with considerable dexterity, as well as courtesy, by the much-entreated officials; and a few minutes before two the usual signal was given, and scarfs, opera mantles, and shawls, fell with a gentle rustle. A brief pause, and then came the guns, and then the subdued

clangour of the military music. A few minutes, and the picturesque procession, with its heralds, and nobles, and pages, entered—and then the Queen. The entire assembly rose, and remained standing until Her Majesty, having taken her seat upon the throne, graciously requested their Lordships to be seated. The Queen wore a splendid tiara of diamonds and a diamond necklace, a white satin dress, and a train of rich claret-coloured velvet. The ensigns of State, borne by the great officers, were duly posted to the right and left of the Sovereign. The Prince Consort took his seat; and word was given to summon the Commons. The ordinary and somewhat protracted delay ensued, but a trampling of feet and cries of "Order" were heard at last, the tall form of the Speaker appeared at the bar, and the members surged up behind him, and, let us add, manifested a strange lack of self-restraint, frequently causing portions of the Speech to be lost by the noise they made. Once, indeed, an enthusiastic member so far forgot himself as to cry "Hear, hear," at a passage which, it may be presumed, strongly reflected his own political tenets.

Her Majesty then read, with her usual clearness and emphasis, the following Speech:—

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

"I am always happy to meet you in Parliament; and on the present occasion it is with peculiar satisfaction that I recur to your assistance and advice.

"The hopes which I expressed at the close of the last Session, that a speedy settlement would be effected of the differences existing between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, have not been realised, and I regret to say that a state of warfare has ensued.

"I have continued to act in cordial co-operation with the Emperor of the French, and my endeavours, in conjunction with my Allies, to preserve and to restore peace between the contending parties, although hitherto unsuccessful, have been unremitting. I will not fail to persevere in these endeavours; but, as the continuance of the war may deeply affect the interests of this country, and of Europe, I think it requisite to make a further augmentation of my naval and military forces, with the view of supporting my representations, and of more effectually contributing to the restoration of peace.

"I have directed that the papers explanatory of the negotiations which have taken place upon this subject shall be communicated to you without delay.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

"The Estimates for the year will be laid before you; and I trust you will find that, consistently with the exigencies of the public service at this juncture, they have been framed with a due regard to economy.

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

"In the year which has just terminated, the blessing of an abundant harvest has not been vouchsafed to us. By this dispensation of Providence the price of provisions has been enhanced, and the privations of the poor have been increased; but their patience has been exemplary; and the care of the Legislature, evinced by the reduction of taxes affecting the necessities of life, has greatly tended to preserve a spirit of contentment.

"I have the satisfaction of announcing to you that the commerce of the country is still prosperous; that trade, both of export and import, has been largely on the increase; and that the revenue of the past year has been more than adequate to the demands of the public service.

"I recommend to your consideration a Bill which I have ordered to be framed for opening the coasting-trade of the United Kingdom to the ships of all friendly nations; and I look forward with satisfaction to the removal of the last legislative restriction upon the use of foreign shipping for the benefit of my people.

"Communications have been addressed by my command to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with reference to the improvements which it may be desirable to effect in their institutions. These communications will be laid before you, and measures will be proposed for your consideration, with the view of giving effect to such improvements.

"The establishments requisite for the conduct of the Civil Service, and the arrangements bearing upon its condition, have recently been under review; and I shall direct a plan to be laid before you which will have for its object to improve the system of admission, and thereby to increase the efficiency of the service.

"The recent measures of legal reform have proved highly beneficial, and the success which has attended them may well encourage you to proceed with further amendments. Bills will be submitted to you for transferring from the Ecclesiastical to the Civil Courts the cognizance of testamentary and of matrimonial causes, and for giving increased efficiency to the Superior Courts of Common Law.

"The laws relating to the relief of the poor have of late undergone much salutary amendment; but there is one branch to which I earnestly direct your attention. The law of settlement impedes the freedom of labour; and, if this restraint can with safety be relaxed, the workman may be enabled to increase the fruits of his industry, and the interests of capital and of labour will be more firmly united.

"Measures will be submitted to you for the amendment of the laws relating to the representation of the Commons in Parliament.

"Recent experience has shown that it is necessary to take more effectual precautions against the evils of bribery and of corrupt practices at elections. It will also be your duty to consider whether more complete effect may not be given to the principles of the Act of the last reign, whereby reforms were made in the representation of the people in Parliament. In recommending this subject to your consideration, my desire is to remove every cause of just complaint, to increase general confidence in the Legislature, and to give additional stability to the settled institutions of the State.

"I submit to your wisdom the consideration of these important subjects; and I pray God to prosper your counsels, and to guide your decisions."

At the conclusion of the Speech, her Majesty retired in the same order in which she had entered the house.

After the delivery of the Royal Speech their Lordships adjourned during pleasure.

Their Lordships resumed at a quarter past five o'clock, when the attendance of Peers was numerous. Among those present were the Earl of Aberdeen, the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Clarendon, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and Earl Granville, on the Ministerial bench; and the Earl of Derby, Lord St. Leonards, the Earl of Malmesbury, Lord Colchester, and the Earl of Cardigan, on the Opposition benches. A considerable number of Peeresses occupied the galleries.

HER MAJESTY'S SPEECH.—THE ADDRESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR having read the Speech delivered by her Majesty,

The Earl of CARNARVON, in a maiden speech of great promise, entered at some length upon a review of our foreign and domestic affairs. He lamented the causes which had led to the existing state of things in the East, but he was sure that if it were found necessary to employ force in support of our allies, the country would find men able to defend its interests and its honour upon the principles laid down by such men as Wellington and Beresford. He cordially congratulated their Lordships upon the just and honourable union which prevailed at this moment between this country and France. Recurring to our domestic affairs, the noble Earl reviewed in succession the topics suggested in the Speech, and expressed his satisfaction that they were about to be brought under the consideration of Parliament.

Earl DUCIE seconded the Address.

The Marquis of CLANRICARDE rejoiced that, in the present very critical state of Europe, there was no probability of an amendment to the Address, as moved and seconded by the two noble Earls. For his own

part, he rejoiced to be able to concur in many of the topics suggested in the Speech from the Throne, particularly in those relative to Parliamentary Reform; but, with respect to Foreign Affairs, he felt called upon—however painful it might be to his own feelings—to express the opinions he held with respect to the policy of her Majesty's Government. He believed they had made unremitting exertions to maintain peace; but those exertions had not conveyed a true notion of what was the opinion and determination of the Government. Up to this moment, these had been concealed alike from Parliament and the country. Even in the Speech itself, not one word was said to show whether we were at peace or war. We were actually at war; and, being at war, why were we afraid to say so? Certainly, it was most unfortunate that the Government had not thought proper to define our position, although they recommended an increase to the army and navy. He complained that information had not been given to the country upon these subjects until we found ourselves in the position of being at war. He characterised this policy as the result of a compromise for the sake of the Cabinet; and asserted that no policy had ever been attended with such want of success. The people of the Continent had, in consequence, conceived a very low opinion of the character of the English nation—that we were a nation not to be trusted by friends or feared by foes—"willing to wound, but yet afraid to strike." We were on the brink of a great war, but a war which a more firm and direct attitude on our part might have prevented. He reproached the Government with not having been more watchful of the aggressive policy of Russia upon Turkey, and contended that they could not plead ignorance, seeing that attention had been called to it by the public press, and, in February last, by the French Government itself. No man could doubt the real character of Prince Menschikoff's mission to Constantinople. Was not the fact of Colonel Rose having sent for the fleet enough to call their attention to the subject? If a straightforward question had been put to the Emperor of Russia as to his intentions at this time, he had no doubt that a straightforward answer would have been given, and that the answer would have been true; but if nothing but a "general assurance" was given in reply, there was clearly no reason why we should not ourselves declare our intentions in a straightforward way. He regretted, therefore, that our Government had not, on this occasion, acted with energy; but, unfortunately, the vigour and energy with which the French Government had wished to act in this affair, had been checked and discouraged by her Majesty's Ministers. He might be told that Austria was acting with us. Then he wished to know whether it was under the advice and with the approval of Austria that our ships had been sent into the Black Sea? By the last accounts it appeared that propositions had been sent to St. Petersburg for further negotiation. He did not expect a favourable reply to these propositions; but he must say that if the Emperor of Russia did not accept them he greatly misunderstood his own interest; for they went, he believed, to compel Turkey to accept a renewal of the treaties which had led to the present difficulties. But if Russia was really mad enough to force us into war, it certainly must not be for the renewal of such treaties, but for placing the relations of the East upon a footing which would secure permanent peace.

The EARL OF CLARENDON: My Lords, I think my noble friend, who has just sat down, would have acted more fairly—although, possibly, not more conveniently to himself—if he had waited for the production of those papers which her Majesty has promised shall be laid before your Lordships without any delay, and which, before your Lordships separate this evening, it is my intention to place upon the table (Hear). But it is only another proof of that inconvenience of which I have seen so much in the course of the last few months—the inconvenience of not being able to lay all the information on this subject before the country. No one can have regretted that inconvenience more than myself; nobody knows better than myself that many misrepresentations might have been prevented by greater publicity. But we thought it right not to depart from the established practice of this country. The Government is amenable to Parliament alone for its conduct. We therefore thought it right to abstain from following the example that has been held out to us of the conduct of other Governments which have no Parliaments to account to (Hear). We thought it better to abstain from producing, from time to time, the information which I am about to lay on the table, although it might have satisfied the public at the time, and to a certain degree have been advantageous to ourselves; but, at the same time, it might have been disadvantageous to the cause of peace. And, although I fear I may stand still lower in my noble friend's estimation than I now appear to do, I am not either ashamed or afraid of saying that the maintenance of peace has been the great and the dearest object we have had in view (Cheers). My noble friend seems to think that we have shown an abject determination to avoid war. My Lords, we have done no such thing. But we have felt it our duty to stop short of no sacrifice except that of national honour, or of not fulfilling our engagements (Cheers). We have felt that to be our duty to this country, because of those numberless social, political, and commercial interests that have grown up, and have extended to every part of the world, during a peace of unexampled duration. We have felt it due to other countries—countries which, like ourselves, have turned to account the blessings of peace, and which must be desirous, therefore, honourably to maintain it; for, my Lords, it must be remembered that if this peace, which is of unexampled duration, be once broken, be once disturbed, it may be followed by a war alike without parallel (Hear, hear, hear), and as unexampled as itself. You must remember that those doctrines which convulsed Europe in 1848 are still cherished by vast numbers; and that they having lost none of their strength, a war now would be no ordinary war. Europe, in such a war, would be the battle-field not only of contending armies but of contending opinions; and we, to whom such mighty interests are entrusted, would have been worthily thought utterly unmindful of their importance, would have been disqualified ourselves when we asked for support in a necessary war, if we could not have then shown that we had first exerted and exhausted every means of maintaining the blessings of peace (Hear). But, my Lords, if we are destined to do so, if it is appointed for us that we are to embark on that state of things, then I must say that never was the tranquillity of the world more wantonly disturbed than it will have been in the provocation of that necessity (Cheers). Never, also, I must say, was there a moment when it was the duty of France and England to stand up together, formally to oppose aggression, and support the just cause of the weak against the strong (Hear, hear). My noble friend has said that we have placed the most undue confidence in the assurances of Russia (Hear, hear). I admit that we did place confidence in those assurances—because they were not only more than we asked, but, in addition, were all that we could desire. We received—not evasive answers, but direct ones. Were we to receive them with suspicion? In my humble opinion, a policy of suspicion is never a wise or an expedient policy; and on this occasion there was no ground for suspicion. The Emperor of Russia had given abundant proof of a desire to maintain the peace of Europe. Over and over again he had affirmed that the Ottoman Empire was a European necessity, and that the maintenance of it was a fundamental principle of European policy (Hear, hear). And, certainly, if he had desired the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire, and the aggrandisement of Russia at the expense of Turkey, the year 1848 would have better suited his designs, and would have been more likely to have seen their attainment. I can assure your Lordships whatever the noble Marquis may think, that, up to the end of April last, we had no reason to believe there existed any other cause of dissension between Russia and Turkey, except that connected with the Holy Places (Hear, hear)—a question which closely concerned France, and in which the Porte, by endeavouring to please both Powers, had given some cause of complaint (Hear, hear). But though the matter could only indirectly affect England, her good offices towards its adjustment were offered, and were accepted; and the difficulty about the Holy Places was settled thereupon. It was only after that settlement that we, for the first time, became aware that other and ulterior objects were sought to be attained by Russia (Hear,

hear, hear). Not but that it is perfectly true that, during the time occupied in those negotiations, rumours of various kinds reached us as to treaties which, it was said, had been proposed under menaces; and as to large armies which, according to the same authority, were being prepared by Russia. Any person, aware of the great secrecy with which all affairs are conducted in Russia, and of the still greater exaggerations which distinguish all news from Constantinople, could tell your Lordships the value of these, and with what caution and distrust they should be received. But whether these rumours were true or untrue, as soon as they reached us they were every one made known by us to the Russian Government; and we asked a categorical answer to our inquiries upon them (Hear). The answer we received was a plain and unqualified denial to all the rumours we had received (Hear, hear). We were assured that the mission of Prince Menschikoff had reference to nothing but the Holy Places (Hear, hear)—that he had great latitude allowed him in the settling of that question, and, in fact, might almost settle it in what way he pleased; but that it was all he had to settle. Subsequent events partly prove the correctness of these statements; for it may seem that though he, in his character as head of the Orthodox Church, had gone farther in his demands than the requirements of his mission justified, he had, at length, abandoned these particulars, and assented to a note which, though still unacceptable to the Porte, was certainly much reduced in regard to its stipulations. When, however, he quitted Constantinople, he quitted it under circumstances menacing to the peace of Turkey and the interests of Europe. It was impossible for us to tell where some of these armies collected on the confines of Turkey might not be marched to. We, therefore, immediately ordered her Majesty's fleet to proceed to Besika Bay, where it was joined by the French fleet (Hear, hear). Your Lordships are aware that after Prince Menschikoff had withdrawn, Count Nesselrode sent back his note to Constantinople with a threat that, unless it was signed in eight days, the Principalities should be occupied. To that demand you are aware that a refusal was the reply, and that thereupon Count Nesselrode's threat was carried into execution. My noble friend seems to think that if the fleet had been ordered when the first Russian soldier crossed the Pruth, all that has followed, or is likely to follow, might have been prevented. But the noble Lord must consider that, in entering the Principalities, the Russians were either sincere or insincere in the assurances and professions made by them to Europe, that that occupation would be but momentary—that they would hold the Principalities only as a material pledge for the fulfilment of the demands then made by Russia upon Turkey; and that the evacuation of them was the wish and desire of the Emperor of Russia himself. In either case, it was in the interests of peace, and in the interests of the Sultan, to allow further opportunity for the ascertainment of the real issue, and for the discovery of some form of note distasteful to neither party, and sufficient to carry into effect the intentions of both. Austria and Prussia entirely agreed with us as to Russia's occupation of the Principalities, which they considered not only unjust and dangerous as a precedent, but as dangerous to themselves, and menacing to the peace of Europe. They therefore asked, at this crisis, to enter into the negotiations, and to assist in an attempt at the settlement of these differences; and they earnestly deprecated any declaration of war on the part of the Sultan until all peaceful means of settling his differences with Russia had been finally exhausted (Hear, hear). And, whatever the noble Lord may think, I doubt not that your Lordships will own it was of great importance that the four Powers should be thus united, that Austria and Prussia should join with England and France in isolating Russia in her wrong (Cheers), and in letting Russia understand that she would not be able to reckon on that support from Austria which, for more than one reason, she might have expected (Hear, hear). Her Majesty's Government never doubted that the occupation of the Principalities was a *casus belli* (Hear, hear); but the Government, recognising it as a *casus belli*, considered also the declaration with which it was accompanied; and, under the impression that that might be sincere, did not advise or press the Sultan to treat it as such, and so end all chance of peace. Take the other case, that Russia was not sincere. A declaration of war at that moment would have furnished the Emperor with just the very excuse he wanted. It would have absolved him from his promise, and from the responsibility of commencing hostilities, and would have left him in a position to say, "I occupied the Principalities, but I declared it should only be for a short time. I did not desire war. I was ready to accept peace; but my assurances have been disbelieved. War has been declared upon me; and I now consider myself bound in honour and dignity to accept the challenge" (Hear, hear). I do not say that that argument would be just; but it would be as good an argument as many others employed in the course of this affair. And your Lordships must be aware that at that moment Turkey was wholly unprepared for resistance—her fortresses ungarrisoned, and her army weak and undisciplined. Were not these most cogent reasons, on our part, for not recommending the Sultan to declare war? By our not doing so, he gained time for settling affairs peacefully, time for making preparation for war. And before this opinion of her Majesty's Government could be conveyed to Constantinople, we found that her Majesty's Ambassador there—who, being on the spot, was a better judge than ourselves of what was for the interest of the Sultan—had tendered the same advice; that the Sultan had accepted and determined to act on it; and that, with such a hope of a peaceable solution, it would have been most unjustifiable in us to urge the Sultan on to war. I trust your Lordship will consider these satisfactory reasons why we did not then press on those more active measures which my noble friend considers to have been necessary; and I assure him that our not doing so was not from any abject indisposition to war, such as he seems to attribute it to; for I do not think that any Government in this country, with a just and righteous cause, would be allowed to want the support of the people of England in carrying it out. And here, I am sure, you will not think it out of place if I declare my testimony to the straightforward, friendly, and perfectly honourable policy of the French Government on this question (Hear, hear). The two Governments have been in daily, I may almost say hourly, communication. They have formed, as it were, but one Cabinet; and I can assure my noble friend that there have never been more differences between the two Governments than are to be found in the same Cabinet (Laughter)—differences that have only increased our respect for each other and rendered the harmony more complete. And this union that exists between the two Governments is not confined to the Eastern question, but extends to other measures, in which, happily, the policy of the two countries, hitherto antagonistic, may be now seen to be harmonious. As regards the Vienna Note, it should be stated that, after Prince Menschikoff left Constantinople, the Austrian Government suggested such a note as, whilst not unacceptable to Russia, should have regard to the independence of Turkey. In the meanwhile the French Government prepared a note on the same basis; and they submitted it to us. We did not think it a note likely to be successful; but, as the French Government had manifest desire to send it, by way of peace offering, both to St. Petersburg and Vienna, we offered no opposition, of course, and it was duly forwarded. The Russian Government, however, gave no answer to it, having already accepted that of Austria. No answer being received at Vienna, this note was adopted, and was sent at the same time to St. Petersburg and Constantinople. At St. Petersburg it was said to be unsatisfactory; but the Emperor, nevertheless, professed himself ready to accept it, with no alteration. The Porte objected to accepting it without certain modifications. These modifications being considered simply as means of rendering more clear the *bond fide* intentions of both parties, were, on that ground, adopted at the Conference of Vienna; but they were rejected by Russia. We did not, of course, think that the note originally exposed the Porte to the dangers supposed, but the changes made were made on that supposition, and were merely such as more clearly defined the first meaning and intention of the note. Great misapprehension exists on this point as to the part taken by the Four Powers. The Four Powers, be it remembered, had merely offered to mediate between the two parties; they were not arbitrating, and are not to be considered as arbitrating. They were not there to enforce the note, of which the first proof is, that, as I have stated, they at once and unhesitatingly adopted the modifications pronounced requisite by the

Porte. But her Majesty's Government did not suppose the note to be of the dangerous character supposed by the Porte, till Russia explained the use it might be turned to; then her Majesty's Government said no more in behalf of it. The conference, after having signed the protocol, determined to ask the Porte on what terms he would be prepared to negotiate it, and the Four Powers offered their bases for the consideration of Russia. By the protocol they affirm that, if Russia does not accept them, she is the sole obstacle to peace, and must be held responsible for war; and that is the present state of affairs as far as negotiations are concerned. No answer has been received from St. Petersburg; but I am inclined to agree that such fair and reasonable propositions as those are not very likely to be rejected.

As regards the position of her Majesty's Government, when notwithstanding that negotiations were going on, that horrible disaster at Sinope happened—when, the Turkish fleet not having been employed that I know of in the way stated by my noble friend, but simply lying peacefully in harbour—when the Turkish fleet was destroyed in the barbarous manner it was (Hear, hear) in the harbour of Sinope, her Majesty's Government with France determined at once to protect, not only the Ottoman territory, but also the Ottoman flag. They determined then to extend their protection, and, as in honour bound, they sent notice of their intention to the Russian Admiral at Sebastopol and to the Russian Government. That is the present state of our communications on this important subject, and, as I have said, I shall refrain now from entering into any details. I have merely endeavoured to meet some of the main charges brought against the Government by the noble Lord, leaving it for the House, when your Lordships have the papers before you, to say whether the interests, the honour, and the dignity of the country have not been well cared for. We may even then, possibly, be charged with having laboured too long, too far, and too hard in the cause of peace, but such will not, I think, be the opinion of the majority of the House. On the contrary, I think that, in the event of war, we shall be able, with all ~~the~~ greater force, to appeal to those pacific efforts, when, if we must, ~~we~~ call for the hearty and energetic assistance of the people of this country in aid of a just and righteous cause (Cheers).

The Earl of MELMRSBURY called attention to the fact that the Royal Speech made no reference to the ~~pr~~ ~~seen~~ by Austria and Prussia in the recent negotiations, and said it as a remarkable omission. The noble Earl then revived the old topic of the speeches at Carlisle and Halifax against the Emperor of the French, and said that these speeches combined with the tone of the coalition press toward ~~noe~~ had placed the Emperor of Russia under great misapprehension as to the harmony which existed between the two countries. When Colonel Rose sent for the fleet eastward, we had then the very best opportunity of assuring Russia of the firmness of the British and French alliance. Similar opportunities had been lost on frequent occasions, and he agreed with the noble Marquis opposite that wiser counsels and greater vigour, at an earlier moment, would have prevented the impending war.

Earl GREY, whilst suspending his opinion upon the whole policy of her Majesty's Government until he had read the papers, must say, that at present it appeared to him to stand greatly in need of explanation and vindication. In the first place, he was not sure that we had any interest in supporting Turkey at all; and in the next, if we had any interest in supporting Turkey, it would take much to convince him that we ought not to have interposed earlier. Yet, if we were on the eve of war, let it be carried on with vigour. Let no consideration of ill-timed economy prevent the Government from calling upon the country for whatever sacrifices might be necessary, in order to inflict upon Russia the heaviest blows in every quarter, so that the contest might be closed as speedily as possible. He hoped, too, that they would adopt measures for the employment of young and vigorous officers, known to possess military talent, and for reforming the vicious organisation of the war departments. At the same time he suggested that it would be inconvenient to bring in a new Reform Bill at a time when Parliament would be involved in a discussion of the measures which a state of war would render necessary.

After a few observations from Lord BERNERS,

The Earl of DERBY said there was one subject alluded to in the Speech in which, from the office he had the honour to hold, he naturally felt great interest. He alluded to the subject of University Reform. Whilst there was room for very considerable improvement in the discipline, management, and studies of the Universities, he was bound to say that there was a well-considered determination to adapt their teachings more and more to the requirements of modern life. The alterations and reforms proposed by the Government, in order to be ultimately beneficial, must be made with caution and prudence by the authorities of the Universities and Colleges themselves, and not through the well-meaning but not always judicious intervention of the House of Commons, or even of their Lordships' House. The measure of her Majesty's Government, he hoped, would be rather of an enabling character, by which the authorities at the Universities might have the means of making such reforms as were necessary. Having noticed several omissions in the Royal Speech, the noble Earl referred to the state of our relations in the East. He asked whether we were in a state of war or not? When the papers were produced, he hoped they would be found to define the exact position of our fleet in the Black Sea. We professed to be at peace; but, while we convoyed the ships and ammunition of one party, and prevented the other from leaving their ports, we were undoubtedly in a state of war. He did not blame the Government for having used their best endeavours to preserve the peace of the world; but he did complain that the means taken by the Government to maintain peace were those best calculated to produce war. The whole policy of Russia for the last 150 years had been a policy of aggression. Such being her character, the mode in which she should be encountered was by a frank and open expression of the point beyond which England would not allow her to go. If this course had been taken earlier we should now have been in a different position to that in which we found ourselves. At the same time, if we were to be involved in war, provided the objects of it were—as he thought they were in this case—laudable, and honourable, and right, then he concurred with the noble Earl opposite (Earl Grey) that it would be inexpedient to introduce a new Reform Bill at such a time, for such a measure was sure to excite much opposition, and to engender a state of feeling which, under such circumstances, might be productive of considerable inconvenience. He recommended, however, that as her Majesty's Government intended to introduce a measure for the prevention of bribery and corruption, they should bring in another for the prevention of intimidation. Before he sat down, he must refer to one question upon which Parliament would neglect its duty if it abstained from commenting. For twelve days the country had been without a Minister for the Home Department. He, therefore, asked the noble Earl at the head of the Government to give some explanation of the cause of the resignation of Lord Palmerston, and to tell the House why, after the expiration of twelve days, the noble Lord had returned to office. The noble Earl concluded by stating that there was no intention of moving an amendment upon the Address; but that he desired to see the word "intimidation" inserted after the words "bribery and corruption."

Lord ABERDEEN, repeating in the strongest terms all that he had ever said to express his horror and detestation of war, defended himself from the odious imputation that he had been "the instrument and tool of Russia" in the late negotiation; whereas, no man in public life had ever taken a more active part against the Russian Government. He was quite willing to repeat all he had ever said against engaging in war with any country, and especially with Russia. The people of this country had not unfrequently rashly and hastily engaged in war, which they have afterwards repented (Hear, hear). He considered it his duty, and the duty of her Majesty's Government, not, under any circumstances, ever to engage in war without first using every possible effort to check it, even when the feeling was laudable and natural, as he admitted it to be in the present instance. There was, at present, he must admit, a popular feeling of indignation against that which appears to be an aggression and an injustice; but still it was the duty of Government to restrain within the bounds of prudence and reason the indulgence of that feeling. He would remind their Lordships that it was not only the statement and precepts of moralists, but the opinion and declaration of all statesmen, that no war can be justifiable unless it partakes of the nature of war in self-defence. His own opinion of war was such that he believed that it was the greatest proof of the utter depravity and corruption of human nature to suppose that anything so horrible as war could ever be just. Yet such, he regretted, was the case; and they must all agree that, while war is the greatest of all calamities, it is also but too often the greatest folly and the greatest wickedness that can be. But while repeating, therefore, in the strongest terms all that he had ever uttered on the subject—of the horror and the deterrence which he entertained of war—still he was ready to admit that there might be circumstances when, although there might be no danger to this country in the war now existing between Turkey and Russia, yet for the proper preservation of that balance which has been established in Europe, no doubt it might be considered in some sense as

arming in self-defence, when we seek to preserve the relative position and power of the various states which are necessary to the security and safety of the whole. As regarded the imputation of his having been the instrument of Russian ambition, the same charge had been brought against him with respect to Austria, with which, since he had been accredited as Ambassador to it, forty years ago, he had had no more concern than with Japan. He maintained, in reply to those who would have preferred a more vigorous course, that nothing would have been gained by a game of brag, and that, if we had menaced Russia in the spring of last year, we should only have provoked an immediate march upon Constantinople, which the Turks were then wholly unprepared to resist. He had, too, been accused of indifference to the French alliance—he who had through his long life uniformly maintained the necessity of such an alliance—the author of the *entente cordiale!* It was consolatory, after such calumnies, to see that on the other side, and with at least as much reason, Count Nesselrode was accused of being a traitor to his country, and as bought by English gold. His Lordship briefly described the circumstances of Lord Palmerston's resignation and return to office; and then, in indignant terms, commented upon the monstrous imputations which had been made upon the character and conduct of Prince Albert. He concluded by denying, in the most emphatic language, that the Prince had ever interfered in the conduct of the business of the army.

Lord HARDINGE added his personal testimony to the statement of the Earl of Aberdeen as to the utter groundlessness of the charges made against the Prince in connection with the administration of the army.

The Earl of DERBY, while generally concurring with Lord Aberdeen's observations on the subject, complained of the manner in which he had introduced it. Warmly disclaiming any connection on the part of the members of the Conservative party with those calumnies, he denied that the Conservative portion of the press was responsible for them, and ascribed their origin and propagation to the *Daily News* and *Morning Advertiser*. He gave it as his opinion that in this country, where, after all, the Sovereign was not a mere puppet, it was advantageous to the public interest and satisfactory to a Minister, that the Queen should have an intimate and confidential adviser, whose interests were bound up with her own, and who should be possessed of the ability and discretion of the present Prince Consort.

Lord CAMPBELL, viewing the question constitutionally, expressed his opinion that not only as a Privy Councillor, but as the husband of the Sovereign, Prince Albert should be consulted upon public affairs.

In the course of the short discussion which brought the debate to a conclusion, the Earl of HARROLD taunted the members of the Opposition with allowing these unfounded attacks to be repeated in journals over which they had influence enough to prevent their publication; upon which the Earl of DERBY repeated his assertion that it was the Radical, and not the Conservative press that originated and magnified the rumours; and the Earl of MELMRSBURY declared that, being unconcerned with the press, he had no power to check the calumnies.

The Address was then agreed to, and their Lordships adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—TUESDAY.

The SPEAKER entered the House at half-past one o'clock; but before that hour honourable gentlemen began to assemble. About 100 members were in attendance before the arrival of the message to attend in the other House, including the following—Mr. T. Hankey (the seconder of the Address), Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Hayter, Mr. Brotherton, Mr. Jas. Wilson, Mr. Serjeant Shee, Mr. Hume, Mr. Geach, Sir J. Pakington, the Solicitor-General, Mr. Henley, Mr. Spooner, the Recorder, Colonel Sibthorp, Mr. W. Williams, Sir J. Y. Buller, Sir J. Hogg, Mr. Thorneley, Sir J. Walmsley, &c.

At a quarter past two o'clock, Mr. Pulman, the Usher of the Black Rod, entered the House and said: Mr. Speaker, the Queen commands this Honourable House to attend her Majesty immediately in the House of Peers.

The Speaker, attended by the Serjeant-at-Arms, and accompanied by nearly all the honourable members present, according to the order of precedence, previously arranged by ballot, proceeded, in obedience to her Majesty's message, to the other House.

The right honourable gentleman re-entered the House after an absence of ten minutes' duration, but did not take the chair; and the sitting was suspended until a quarter to four o'clock.

The Speaker took the chair at a quarter to four o'clock.

NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. Maguire took the oaths and his seat for Dungarvon. The following members also took the oaths and their seats:—Sir W. H. II Beach for East Gloucestershire, in the place of the Marquis of Worcester, now Duke of Beaufort; Mr. E. P. Buckley for Salisburys, in the place of Mr. B. Wall, deceased; Lord R. T. C. Cecil for Stamford, in the room of Mr. Herries, resigned. Mr. Richardson, the first member of the Society of Friends returned by an Irish constituency, took the usual affirmation and his seat for Lisburn.

NEW WRITS.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I beg to move that Mr. Speaker do issue his writ for the election of a member to serve in Parliament for the University of Oxford, in the room of one whose name I am sure will be long remembered in this House with mingled feelings of regret and respect (Cheers), my honourable friend, Sir Robert H. Inglis, since his election, having accepted the office of steward of the Hundred of Northstead. The motion was agreed to.

On the motion of Mr. HAYTER, new writs were issued for the election of a member for the county of Louth, in the room of Mr. Chichester Fortescue, who has accepted the office of a Lord of the Treasury; for the election of a member for the southern division of the county of Stafford, in the room of Viscount Lewisham, called to the House of Peers; and for the election of a member for the borough of Brecknock, in the room of Mr. C. Morgan, deceased.

On the motion of Sir W. JOLLIFFE, a writ was issued for the election of a member for the southern division of Shropshire, in the room of Mr. Clive, deceased.

On the motion of the Earl of MARCH, a writ was issued for the election of a member for the western division of the county of Sussex, in the room of Mr. Prime, who has accepted the office of steward of the Chiltern Hundreds.

LATE ELECTION FOR PETERBOROUGH.

Mr. BANKES presented a petition against the return of Thomson Hankey, junior, as a member to serve in Parliament for the borough of Peterborough.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR. HAYTER: Perhaps it will be convenient if I should now state to the House the order in which her Majesty's Government intend to submit certain measures for the consideration of hon. members. Upon Friday the right hon. gentleman the President of the Board of Trade will move in committee of the whole House for leave to bring in a bill to admit foreign ships to the coasting trade (Hear, hear); and on the same day the right hon. gentleman will also move for leave to bring in a bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to merchant shipping; and upon Monday, February 6th, the noble Lord the member for the city of London will move, in committee of the whole House, on the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and abjuration (Hear, hear); and on Friday, February 10th, the noble Lord will also move for leave to bring in a bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to bribery, treating, and undue influence at the election of members of Parliament (Hear, hear); and on the same day the noble Lord will move for leave to bring in a bill to amend the law as to the trial of election petitions (Hear, hear); and on the same day the right hon. gentleman the President of the Poor-law Board will move for leave to bring in a bill to amend the law relating to settlement, removal, and chargeability of the poor in England and Wales; and on Monday, the 13th of February, the noble Lord the member for the city of London will move for leave to bring in a bill to amend the law concerning the vacating of seats by members of the House of Commons (Hear, hear).

HER MAJESTY'S SPEECH AND THE ADDRESS.

THE SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I was this day in the other House of Parliament, where her Majesty was most graciously pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which, for the sake of greater accuracy, I have procured a copy.

The right honourable Gentleman then read her Majesty's Speech, which will be found in the Lord's report.

Lord CASTLEROSSE, in moving the adoption of an Address to her Majesty, in answer to the Speech, briefly reviewed the successive paragraphs in which it was composed. Dwelling at greater length upon the Eastern question, the noble Lord invoked the perfect unanimity of the

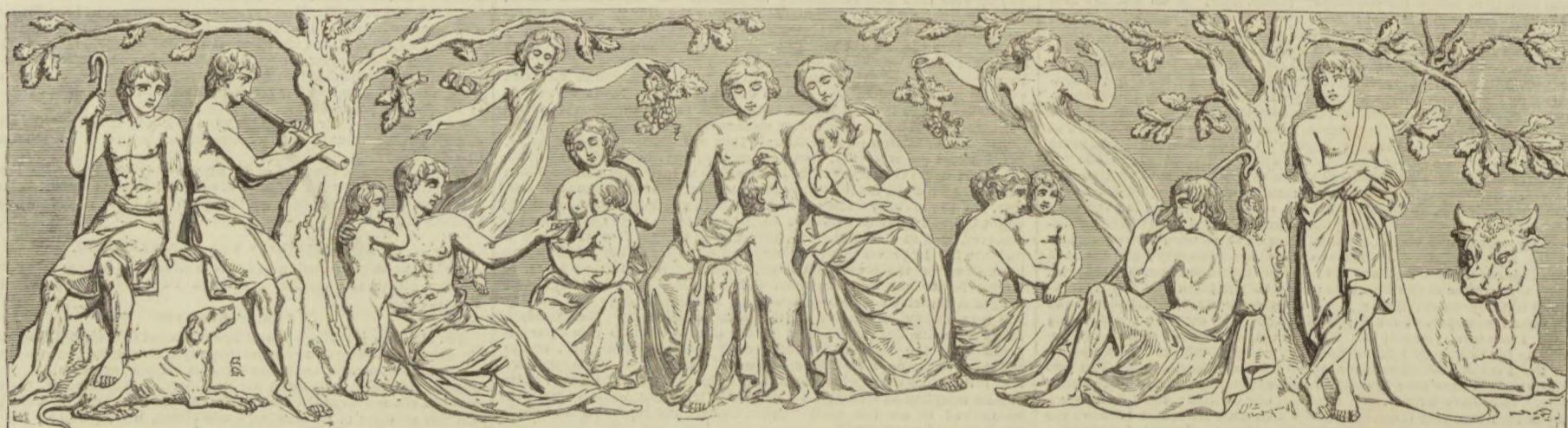
House in carrying out vigorous measures, if such should prove necessary, but ascribed high credit to the Ministry for the forbearance and moderation which they had exercised in their prolonged efforts to avert the deplorable calamity of war. Should this country unfortunately be compelled to engage in war, it would have the consolation of knowing that it will not be a war embarked in rashly, or for the sake of military or naval glory, or through the desire of conquest, but undertaken for the purpose of maintaining those treaties to which the faith of England is pledged.

Mr. T. HANKEY, in seconding the motion, selected from the Royal Speech its most important topic, the controversy in Eastern Europe; and considered that topic in its most important bearings, namely, the state of fitness and preparation in which England was found at the arrival of a crisis that seemed to threaten war. For this purpose he compared the financial and industrial resources of the country as they now existed, and as they were left at the close of the last war. Enumerating various facts and returns which showed how much had been done towards diminishing debt, reducing taxation, enacting reforms, developing industry, and extending civil and religious liberty, during the past forty years, the hon. member pointed out that all these vast improvements had been effected in a period of peace, and were rendered possible by it. He contended that the Government, therefore, had done their duty, and deserved well of the country, by labouring indefatigably and making all possible concession for the sake of prolonging peace. He then expressed a belief that those labours and concessions were not yet exhausted; but declared that there was a clear and well-defined limit to them—that assigned by the credit and character of the country. Passing on to other points in the Royal Speech, the hon. member invited the House to sympathise with certain distressed classes, whose sufferings he believed would be only temporary, and to assist in accomplishing the promised reforms in University Education, the Ecclesiastical Courts, the Law of Settlement, and the Representative System.

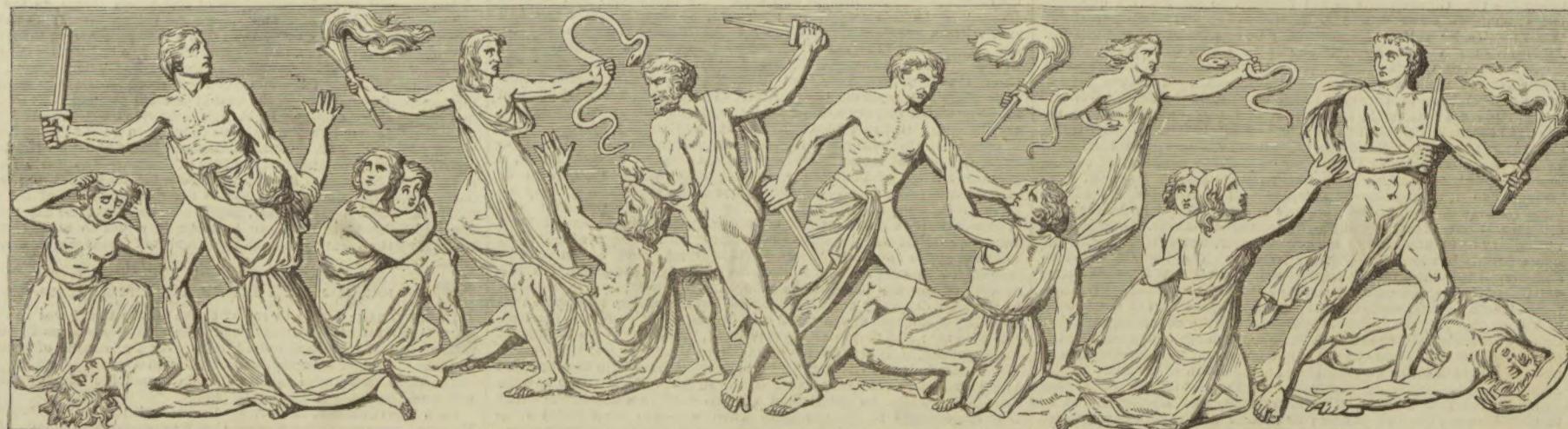
The question having been put, Mr. H. BAILLIE said that he should chiefly confine himself to the question of the East. He was not of opinion that it was desirable to wait for papers, as the House had already as much information as it was likely to get out of a Blue Book, carefully prepared for concealments. He did not blame Government for trying to avert war, or believe that a bolder policy at first would have been more successful; but he regretted that they had adhered to the antiquated theory called the traditional policy of this country, and had thought that its blood and treasure should be expended in maintaining the tottering fabric of the Turkish empire. When Prince Menschikoff presented his ultimatum, we ought to have informed Turkey that she was not to reckon on our aid, in



HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN ASCENDING THE THRONE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.



PEACE AND WAR.—BAS-RELIEFS OF THE NEW VESTIBULE, AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.



The Grand Vestibule at the summit of the State staircase in Buckingham Palace has recently received these interesting embellishments, from the hand of Mr. John Thomas, of Paddington, executed by com-

mand of her Majesty and Prince Albert. The subjects are Peace and War. They are very ably designed, and skilfully carried out. The back-

grounds of these compositions being a dull red, their effect is greatly heightened; and it harmonises with the richness of gold and colour on all sides.

which case we should have heard no more of war (Disapprobation). The Prince's proposals would have been accepted, and the fate of the Ottoman empire indefinitely postponed; and this was all that could be gained by a bloody war. But from the moment that the assurance had been given that England would support Turkey, this country became a party to the war, and ought to have taken part in it; but the Government had been afraid to follow up the policy they had announced. He proceeded to say that the war would be unpopular with religious persons and others, and suggested that France possessed of Antwerp, might be a more dangerous neighbour than Russia at Constantinople. Passing to the Reform question, he said that at a proper time he should be prepared to co-operate in real reforms, but that he should endeavour to postpone a subject calculated to cause internal turmoil when we were on the eve of a dangerous war.

Mr. BLACKETT described the opening passages of the Queen's Speech as meagre and colourless, and said that to the policy of which he complained might be ascribed the wild jealousies and suspicions that had lately prevailed.

Colonel SIXTHORP characterised the Speech from the Throne as a contrivance of Ministers to cover their own iniquitous practices.

Sir R. PEEL expressed his disapprobation of the mean and subtle hypocrisy which had marked the conduct of Russia, and condemned the factious policy that sought to contrast the policy of the English and French Governments, which was precisely similar, in order to cast discredit on the former. Our acting in union with France was the only way to maintain the independence of the Ottoman empire. What had been called an anti-slavery policy was that which would secure the support of the large body of the country. Strongly condemning the conduct of the Czar, and his pretended sympathy for the Greek Church, he proceeded to other points in the Speech, and dwelt with satisfaction on the improved condition of the country, a result due, as regarded England, to our free commercial system, and as regarded Ireland to the working of the Encumbered Estates Act. He hated war, but denied that this would be an unpopular one, and he gave his general support to Government, which had given proof of a wise and temperate judgment in these negotiations.

Mr. HUME thought the Oriental question could not be discussed until the documents were produced; but concurred with Mr. Blackett, that Government had shown a want of confidence in the people. Before additional money was asked for, for the army and navy, he hoped that the reforms recommended by committees would be made in both systems, in which case no increased taxation would be necessary.

Mr. LIDDELL, in reference to the paragraph on the Navigation-laws, said that he was not prepared to go so far as others had done in applauding the results of recent legislation; and adverted to the terrible

casualties which [have] lately occurred from vessels being ill or insufficiently manned. He entered into some statistics to show the vast power of the Russian empire; and assured the Government that any measure to vindicate the honour of the country, and maintain the integrity of the Ottoman empire, should be welcomed on his side of the House. He thought the Reform Bill should have been postponed; and added, that, if it contained disfranchisement clauses, it would produce an acrimonious and ill-timed struggle, which was uncalled for by the people, and which there was precedent, in Mr. Pitt's conduct, for postponing, on the eve of a war.

Serjeant SHEE complained that there was no mention of Ireland in the Speech. Her grievances were few, but they were important, and demanded redress; and one of the gravest of them was the relation of landlord and tenant.

Sir J. YOUNG referred to what had previously taken place on the subject, to the rejection of Serjeant Shee's own bill, and to the understanding that had been come to in the House of Lords, that the measure was to be reconsidered there, in the first place, during the present session—an engagement for the fulfilment of which the Government intended to press. He hoped, therefore, that they were exculpated from the Serjeant's charge.

Mr. D. SEYMOUR expressed his gratitude to the Government for what it was intended to do in regard to the Navigation-laws.

Mr. W. FAGAN regretted that University reform was not to be extended to Ireland, and complained that the Roman Catholics of that country were excluded from university education.

Mr. HADFIELD was very thankful that a reform was to take place in the Ecclesiastical Courts system, and regretted that these courts were still to be permitted to exist.

Mr. J. PHILLIMORE regretted that education had no place in the Speech, and that Convocation was to be allowed to do twelve hours' mischief.

Mr. DISRAELI was not disposed to enter into the Eastern question, but thought that, when her Majesty made a Speech, it demanded notice from those to whom it was addressed. Adverting to the successful result to which Ministers had, last session, led the House to believe the negotiations would be brought, he could not refer without hesitation to the language of the Speech. But he should read the papers before discussing the subject, and merely wished to remind the House of the tone in which it had last been addressed on the subject. It was still addressed in the same tone, though, after the failure of the plans adopted by Ministers six months ago, they ought now to have assured the House that the object of their negotiations was not in the spirit of the Vienna Note. The language of the Speech, and of the proposed Address, in regard to Russia, was not as firm and explicit as the circumstances of the case required. Looking at the congratulations which were used in reference to our union with France, he could not but remember that a year ago he had called attention to our relations with that country, and to language which he deemed calculated to injure it. He was amply vindicated. There was a suspicious arrangement of language in the Speech which made it doubtful whether her Majesty was so fortunate as to be in co-operation, not only with France, but with Austria and Prussia; and, if this were the case, the tone of the Speech should have been bolder. And it would not have been unreasonable to introduce a reference to the three important points of difference between ourselves and the United States. Why was there no mention of the treaty which had opened to us all the great rivers of South America? Surely, the omission was not because the arrangement had been mainly effected by the predecessors of the present Government. He proceeded to say that he gave the Ministry every credit for having endeavoured to avert war, but that he should expect to find that they had been the faithful guardians of the honour of this country. The best proof that they expected peace was the ample provision they had

made for the occupation of the House, for he could not believe that a body of statesmen would, on the eve of the complications of a terrible conjuncture, have asked the House to undertake all the great reforms proposed to it. He agreed with Mr. Liddell in the abstract proposition that the measure of Parliamentary Reform was most inopportune brought forward, if we were going to war; but he considered that Government had only done what it was their duty to do in meeting the question—two Governments having been formed on the basis of the dogma that such a reform was absolutely necessary. It was impossible for the Government to escape from the question without sacrificing all their reputation for political prescience. And there would be the less excuse, inasmuch as last year, when members of the Ministry declared themselves to be in fear of worse than war—invasion—they still were promised reform. It might be madness to bring in the large measure of Parliamentary reform, but the present Ministers must do it. The Bill when produced, should receive due attention from his friends and himself, but he protested against the adroit arrangement that coupled the reform of corruption with the alteration of the franchise. He would support the first (remarking that no party had so little interest in corruption as the landed interest), but would not connect it with measures for reconstructing the electoral body of the country. And why was not intimidation to be suppressed as well as bribery? He went on to say that he deemed it unwise to introduce a measure of Parliamentary reform at the present time, and was disposed to stand upon the measure of 1832, whose injustice time had in some degree softened, and with which it was most undesirable to tamper. But if the new and large measure were produced,

he should analyse it to the best of his power, with a view to bringing about a juster relation between parties, and for redressing the injustice which, as he had demonstrated, had been done to the land. He and his friends should appeal to facts and principles, and should demand justice.

Lord J. RUSSELL, while waiting for the production of the official documents, declined to add anything in defence of the Ministry to the vindication already offered by the Member for Tamworth. He defended the secret system of diplomacy, excused the Vienna note, and confessed that slight hope remained that Russia would accept the terms of accommodation last sent; but remarked, in reply to Mr. Disraeli, that the despatch in question fully secured the independence of Turkey, and had received the signature of the Turkish Ambassador. Respecting the co-operation of Austria and Prussia, the noble Lord stated that those powers had joined with England and France in the issue of certain manifestoes, and ventured to trust that they would also unite with equal cordiality, should it become necessary to proceed to acts. Turning to the strictures offered upon other points, Lord J. Russell observed, in regard to popular education, that it possessed the sympathy of Government, but must be made a question of time; and, with reference to Parliamentary Reform, contended that the precedent set by Mr. Pitt, which Mr. Disraeli had adduced, did not now apply, because reform was postponed in 1793 in prospect of a war against democracy, while our present foe was the reverse of a democrat. He could not think that there was any danger in discussing the question of reform during the excitement of a foreign war. The time that really was dangerous for such a discussion was the time of great popular excitement and dissension at home (Hear). It was said that there was no feeling on the



THE NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.—ST. STEPHEN'S PORCH.



STAIRCASE OF ST STEPHEN'S PORCH.

subject—that there was a complete apathy about reform. If that really was the case, was it not the proper time to discuss the question of reform (Hear)? Lest in the course of the war there should be times and periods of distress, when the people should become excited, and large meetings should be assembled in every town, partly crying out for more wages and cheaper food, and partly crying out for an increase of political power—was it not wise to forestall any demand of that sort (Hear, hear)? Supposing we had the calamity of war, and had with it the necessity for increasing the public burdens, was it not a fitting time to enlarge the privileges of the people when Parliament was imposing upon them fresh taxes (Hear, hear), so that in imposing taxes upon the people, it might, as far as possible, impose them upon those who had elected them (Hear, hear)? The noble Lord then alluded to the charges brought against the Prince Consort, noticing what he considered calumnies in deference to the honest delusion with which they were accompanied, stating generally that no Sovereign had ever governed more strictly in the spirit of the Constitution than her present Majesty, and, adding that the Queen had invariably accorded her full and entire confidence to the successive Ministers who had obtained the confidence of the House of Commons, he proceeded to delineate the somewhat undefined position of the Prince Consort, arguing that the presence of his Royal Highness at the Privy Council Board, and his cognizance of all public despatches, were equally sensible and appropriate. When her Majesty came to the Throne, being then only eighteen years of age, and, of course, inexperienced, Lord Melbourne considered what it became him to do when her Majesty was pleased to say that he should continue in the post of First Lord of the Treasury (Hear, hear). It seemed to Lord Melbourne that it was his duty to advise her Majesty on all subjects with regard to matters of domestic interest—with regard to the arrangements of the Palace, as well as to perform the ordinary duties of Prime Minister (Hear, hear). But, doubtful as to whether he had come to a right opinion, he resorted for advice to the highest authority he could obtain; he went to the Duke of Wellington (Cheers). The Duke of Wellington entirely agreed with him, and said that, if he held the office of Prime Minister, he would take exactly the course that Lord Melbourne had pointed out (Cheers). Three years after her Majesty's accession her Majesty espoused Prince Albert. The position in which the Prince Consort should stand then became a matter for consideration. He was, as the House knew, naturalised by Parliament, and naturalised in such a manner that he could be a member of the Privy Council (Hear). Some doubts had been stated on this subject, but anybody who looked into the subject would see that he was not only enabled but fully authorised to sit in the Privy Council (Hear, hear). His Lordship went on to explain as follows:—"Lord Melbourne asked me what was my opinion as to the course that should be pursued with respect to the despatches that should arrive, and all the secret communications of the Minister? I said that I had no doubt whatever that her Majesty should communicate them as she thought fit to the Prince Consort (Cheers); and that I did not think, in his relation to her Majesty, it would be fair to have any concealment on the subject (Loud cries of 'Hear, hear,' and cheers). I am not sure from recollection, and do not very distinctly recollect, whether Lord Melbourne at that time mentioned the subject, but I am sure that Lord Melbourne and I thought it our duty to advise that that should be the conduct with regard to public despatches and communications (Hear, hear). I think that any other advice would be foolish and unbecoming (Cheers). It could not but happen that the Prince, after his marriage, should discuss public events with her Majesty (Hear, hear); and that he should only gather his information from the newspapers or public statements, while her Majesty had all the despatches and official information before her, would not only be an absurdity, but it would be impracticable (Cheers). Well then, Sir, such being the position of the Prince, it is quite evident that there is no truth whatever in the colour which has been attempted to be placed upon his Royal Highness's relation to her Majesty in this respect, or in the statement that Lord Melbourne constitutionally debarred the Prince from a knowledge of those state affairs, and that Sir Robert Peel was the first person who introduced the practice (Hear, hear). Why, Sir, I believe, it is true, that in Sir Robert Peel's time, it first happened that his Royal Highness was present during the interview with Ministers, but the House will at once see, that if his Royal Highness, according to the advice of Lord Melbourne, was informed of all that was going on, and knew as well as her Majesty all that was taking place, his mere introduction into the closet when the Ministers had their communications with her Majesty was merely a convenience, and established nothing beyond the principle that had been adopted (Hear). If the Prince had not been present when the Ministers were with her Majesty, her Majesty would have communicated with him. That would be a circuitous report of what the Ministers had said, and would be a less convenient mode of proceeding than if his Royal Highness had been present; for in the one case, as in the other, his Royal Highness having, I need hardly say, the intellect (Cheers), the information, and the general knowledge (Hear, hear) which belong to him, it would have been quite impossible that her Majesty would not have spoken to him on every matter of great importance that would arise (Hear, hear). I am now speaking generally of their relations, without any reference to the constitutional relations which subsist between the Sovereign and her Ministers, because, as I have stated at the commencement, there has never been any complaint that these relations have not been properly recognised (Hear, hear). It was Lord Melbourne and I who advised it, and we thought we were acting entirely and in the spirit of the Constitution in giving that advice, that his Royal Highness should be fully informed with respect to all that had passed (Hear, hear). But did Lord Melbourne consider that there was no advantage in her Majesty taking that counsel (Hear, hear). Be it remembered that he had taken upon himself on her accession, during the youth of the Queen, to give her advice upon every subject. At the time that Sir Robert Peel assumed the reins of Government, her Majesty had been already married. It was in the beginning of September, 1841; and on the 30th of August in that year Lord Melbourne wrote in those terms to her Majesty:—

Lord Melbourne cannot satisfy himself without again stating to your Majesty in writing, what he had the honour of saying to your Majesty respecting his Royal Highness the Prince. Lord Melbourne has formed the highest opinion of his Royal Highness's judgment, temper, and discretion; and he cannot but feel a great consolation and security in the reflection, that he leaves your Majesty in a situation in which your Majesty has the inestimable advantage of such advice and assistance. Lord Melbourne feels certain that your Majesty cannot do better than to have recourse to it when it is needed, and to rely upon it with confidence.

That was the opinion which Lord Melbourne had formed of his Royal Highness's ability, and I may say that no one who had had any intercourse with his Royal Highness could form any other opinion (hear, hear), but must appreciate the judgment and ability of this amiable Prince (Cheers). His Lordship then adverted to another portion of the charges, namely, those connected with the army, and stated that the late Duke of Wellington had apprised Prince Albert that his Grace considered it would be an advantage to the service if, after the Duke's death, the Prince should become Commander-in-Chief; and that the Prince, though appreciating such a compliment, rejected the idea, on the ground that his place was always to be near the Queen; that the Duke urged that the Prince should give his attention to anything concerning the interests of the army, and this his Royal Highness promised—but he had never interfered with its ordinary business, or with its patronage. Lord J. Russell then explained the circumstances connected with the late resignation of the Adjutant-General, and declared that it was totally false that the Prince had anything to do with the matter. He next offered a refutation of the charge that the Prince had interfered in the Eastern question, in contravention of the views of the Queen's responsible advisers, and had corresponded with foreign ministers; and his Lordship added a hope that the country would consider what must be the position of a Prince Consort; and declared that there

was no harm in telling the truth, namely, that in public and private councils the Queen and Prince were inseparable; and he concluded with an eloquent expression of belief that the people of England, always just, would, on reflection, see in the fact an additional cause of attachment to the Throne.

Mr. WALPOLE said that the House was indebted to Lord J. Russell for his complete defence of Prince Albert, and begged, on his honour, to add corresponding testimony of her Majesty's confidence in the Administration of Lord Derby during its tenure of office. He also expressed satisfaction with various explanations made by Lord J. Russell in reference to the Royal Speech; and, after a few strictures on the Eastern negotiations, adverted to the promised Reform Bill, which he did not think was required, deprecated the mixing up separate topics, and warned its authors against undue change, and the substitution of greater for lesser evils.

The Address was then agreed to, and the House adjourned at ten minutes to eleven.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—WEDNESDAY.

The Speaker sat at twelve o'clock.

Mr. John O'Connell took the oaths and his seat for Clonmel.

Mr. BAINES presented a petition from the magistrates of the hundred of Londesdale, South Lancashire, in favour of the establishment of reformatory institutions for juvenile offenders.

Mr. BASS presented a petition from Derby, praying that England would assist the Porte in repressing the aggressions of Russia.

Mr. OLIVEIRA gave notice that he would, on the 14th of February, bring the subject of the Wine-duties under the consideration of the House.

In answer to a question from Mr. W. Williams, Lord PALMERSTON said he hoped to bring in a bill to alter the present system of sewerage at an early day (Cheers).

Lord J. RUSSELL gave notice that he would, on an early day, move that no new writ should be issued for Cambridge, and other unrepresented boroughs, before Thursday, the 9th of March.

Mr. OLIVEIRA gave notice that on Tuesday, the 7th inst., he would move for a return of the expenses that have been incurred in alterations, repairs, and improvements to the various public buildings in Downing-street, from the year 1830 to the end of the year 1853, specifying what amount has been expended each year, and detailing its application.

Mr. OLIVEIRA presented a petition in favour of a reduction in duty upon wines, numerously signed by the inhabitants of Marylebone.

Mr. INGHAM presented a petition from the Corporation of Tyne-mouth, in favour of decimal coinage.

Mr. BROTHERTON moved, that if any new business be brought on after twelve o'clock at night, and a member rises to order, and objects to the House proceeding with the debate, a division shall, without further discussion, be immediately taken on the question that the debate be now adjourned, unless the mover of the original motion agrees to its being postponed. He was of opinion that the motion would not meet the evil, but he believed that it would in some degree mitigate it; and, as he had no hope of carrying a motion to remove the evil altogether, he was anxious to carry the present motion, which would enable the House to transact its business more satisfactorily and beneficially for the country.

Mr. W. WILLIAMS seconded the motion.

Sir J. PAKINGTON said the motion was a mere question of hours; but there was another of more importance—that of months. He thought they ought to meet earlier in the year, by which the public business of the House would be facilitated, and would render the long sittings of Parliament, as at present, unnecessary.

Lord J. RUSSELL said that the House had at all times the power of controlling the sittings of the House, and on many occasions measures were necessarily brought forward which, from their peculiar nature, made it necessary to engage the attention of the House under circumstances which could not possibly be foreseen. He could not see that any benefit would be attained by adopting the motion, seeing that it was always in the power of any member who wished to obstruct the business of the House to do so under any circumstances. That House was not like that of the Legislative Assemblies of the United States, because there were State Legislatures, whereas, in this country, all the business might be done in the Imperial Parliaments. He would not, however, object to the appointment of a committee to consider the subject, with a view to the adoption of any arrangement which should be thought desirable. He hoped his hon. friend would not persist in his motion, but if a committee were appointed, the Government would willingly consent to it.

Mr. HUME thought that they should commence the session with the determination to finish their business early in July; and if they came to that determination, he was sure the business of the House would be more satisfactorily settled. He thought the question should be settled by the House, and not by a committee. The Government had commenced well as to the business of the House, and he hoped they would carry on the system they had commenced. No human strength could stand against the present system. The time was when he did not care how long he sat up, but he was altered now, and could not keep up as he used to.

Mr. WALPOLE, Mr. E. DENISON, and Mr. NAPIER were in favour of the appointment of a committee, as the best course they could pursue.

After some observations from Mr. HADFIELD,

Mr. NAPIER said, he thought this inconvenience would be remedied by preventing Irish business from being brought on after twelve o'clock at night (Cheers). He was in favour of the appointment of a committee.

Mr. BROTHERTON having made a few observations in reply, the House divided, when there appeared—

For the motion, 88; against it, 54: majority, 34.

Mr. H. G. LIDDELL moved for a return of the time at which the night mail from London is due at York and Newcastle-upon-Tyne respectively, under the present arrangement; of the date when such arrangement took effect; and of the actual time of arrival at York and Newcastle on each day, from that date to the last day of December, 1853.

Sir G. GREY complained of the present delay, but did not think that the adoption of the motion would remedy the evil; and he hoped the Postmaster-General would consider the subject, and give directions for the carrying out of a better arrangement.

After a short discussion the motion was agreed to.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

The report on the Address, in reply to her Majesty's Speech, was brought up and agreed to.

The House adjourned at half-past two.

(For remainder of Parliament see page 91.)

THE REFRESHMENT-ROOMS, HOUSE OF LORDS.

(See page 112.)

THE Refreshment-rooms to the House of Lords are the most luxurious apartments imaginable: the beautiful ceiling—the richly-carved doors, screens, and paneling—the fittings-up, the crimson and green paper-hangings, and the general decorations, being extremely striking and harmonious in their *tout ensemble*.

The Refreshment rooms are situated in the river front of the New Palace, behind the Lords' Library, and are approached from the House of Peers by the Bishops' Corridor, which communicates with the Victoria Lobby. The Refreshment-rooms are about 50 feet in length, 20 feet in breadth, and are about 20 feet in height. They are divided from each other by an exquisitely-carved screen or bar, at which the refreshments are served, by means of lifts, from the kitchens below; and every modern appliance in the management of the cuisine has been carefully studied.

The Rooms are lighted by windows on one side only, and which look into the Peers' Court; and, on the opposite side, the walls are paneled, and have fireplaces of rich and beautiful design, the stone chimneypieces being highly decorated, with bosses and foliage. At present the paneled spaces of the rooms are filled with a very handsome papering; but subjects, groups of dead game, &c., have been suggested as appropriate pictorial embellishments, and will doubtless be carried into effect. An extremely rich and beautiful scroll moulding, surmounted by a pierced trefoil cresting, runs round the upper part of the walls; and above them the ceiling is slightly coved, this portion being filled with elegant tracery, and the flat spaces within the tracery painted with admirably-designed arabesques. Except at the coving just described, the ceiling is flat, divided by massive ribs into square compartments, and these again filled with diamond-shaped compartments, each containing a painting of fruit, very cleverly treated in a conventional style, harmonising admirably with the details of the mouldings and the bosses which spring from the intersections of the ribs. Amongst the carved furniture is a buffet, especially noticeable for its exquisite richness of sculptured detail, and beautiful proportions.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, FROM WITHIN.

If, as a representative institution, the House of Commons does not give universal satisfaction, there can be no doubt that, as a constituent body, it is an object of interest to the great majority of Englishmen; and there prevails a very natural curiosity to know something of its ways and habits, the place in which it moves and has its being, its modes of doing business, the personnel of its members, and all the minutiae of what may be called its "inner life." Perhaps, as is the case with Freemasonry, although its proceedings may be in themselves no very wonderful things, yet, because they are, in a certain sense, not public, the desire of penetrating the mystery—such as it is—is stimulated and kept up. It is true that the elaborate reporting of the debates in the newspapers gives publicity to all that is said which is worth preserving; but that by no means satisfies a desire to know the daily goings on there; or gives any accurate idea of the peculiarities of the men of whom the House is composed, or of the system by which they are guided. Nothing can be gathered from the reports, of the way of thought and the way of talk of the House of Commons, which are peculiarly its own; and, although it takes a session or two to mould a new man into a businesslike member; yet, very soon after his admission within its moral portals, he becomes the "member" in tone and habit, and even appearance, and presents to the initiated very unmistakeable indications of his calling—for a calling, and no inactive and unlaborious one, it unquestionably is.

That the profession of a member of Parliament demands, in those who embrace it, certain adaptabilities—mental and physical—is undoubtedly; and, if this were the place for a disquisition on such questions, they might easily be pointed out. But, the object is to throw some light into the moral penetralia of the House, as well as its material aspect, and arrangements as the place of business of the busiest and most stirring branch of the Legislature; and to describe such things and places as can only become familiar to its *habitués* proper.

To begin with the beginning. Let it be imagined that some person, authorised to enter unchecked into the innermost recesses of the Commons' House of Parliament, arrives at the spot on which a Royal palace has stood since the days of Edward the Confessor, and on which now stands the vast Gothic building, the official name of which is her Majesty's Palace at Westminster. As, by the happy and skilful treatment of the architect, Westminster Hall has been made the grand vestibule of the Houses of Parliament, it will be necessary to enter New Palace Yard—in the centre of which, and opposite the great door of the Hall, Marochetti's statue of Richard I. has been recently erected. Whoever wishes to know anything of Parliament must be prepared to meet with much that is odd and incongruous; and perhaps it will strike the observer that here is incongruity the first: for, whatever may have been Cœur de Lion's merits, there is not any historical record which points to the connection between a memorial of him and the popular section of the Legislature. We must omit, however, all detailed notice of the Building and its several parts, most of which have been already described in our columns, and proceed at once to the "Lobby" of the House.

Pushing that door open, you are at once in the Lobby of the House. This is a fine and rich-looking apartment, about 46 feet wide each way; being square on the plan, having each of its four sides symmetrical, and each containing an archway giving access to those parts of the building appertaining to the House of Commons: that on the north being the entrance to the House itself; that on the south to the Central Hall, just described; that on the east to the Libraries, Refreshment-rooms, &c.; and that on the left, to the private entrance for members. Carved open screens, bearing the words, "Domine salvam fac Reginam," on each side of these various archways, part off the Post-office, Vote-office, and other apartments connected with the daily business of members; while windows over these, rich with stained glass, bearing the coats of arms of boroughs returning members to Parliament, give a subdued light to the interior. The roof is of dark wood, and massive in its character, while the flooring is paved with encaustic tiling, with the motto, "God save the Queen" introduced, and so, of course, continually trodden under foot by her faithful Commons and others of her lieges. At night the lighting consists chiefly of massive and elaborate carved brass gas standards placed in the four angles, which are ventilated on a principle invented by Faraday, by means of which all communication between the air of the apartments and the light is cut off, and the deteriorating effect of the gas prevented.

It has been said that the west door of the Lobby leads to the private entrance for members, and that passage is worthy of notice, as it is a restoration of the old cloisters of St. Stephen's, which has been carried out with such skill, that the additions and restorations can with difficulty, if at all, be distinguished from the old work. The fan tracery of the groin is one of the most elaborate and beautiful specimens of this kind of architecture that yet remains in England, and from the richness of this portion it may be gathered what was the splendour of the Royal Palace and Monastery, of which it formed a part. The small projecting chapel, anciently an oratory, on the west side of the Cloister Court, is singularly remarkable for the beauty of its details. The upper story of the Cloister had been entirely destroyed, either by innovation, or the fire of 1834; and only just enough remained to afford an idea and authority for its restoration. An entirely new Upper Cloister has been added, which is reached from the Lower Cloister by a characteristic and admirably-executed staircase. The Lower Cloister is used as a receptacle for the members' cloaks and coats, the reception of their letters, and the usual appendages of the private entrance, which opens into Westminster Hall, and has also an outlet into the Star-chamber Court, the gate of which is in New Palace Yard. The effect of the rich groining of these Cloisters both above and below, heightened by the bright hues of the stained glass of the windows, and the many-coloured tiles of the floor, is most striking; and the staircase, with its central clustered pillar supporting the groined stone roof above, is most picturesque, as well as original, in its composition.

Returning to the Lobby, we shall find that, on each side of the arched doorway of massive oak, studded and ornamented, and looking as if the Gordon Riots, when the mob threatened to break in and work their will on the members, was in the mind of the architect when he planned it, there sit enthroned, in large leather chairs, the two Janitors of the House. They are important functionaries (as all door-keepers are), and act as "Tylers;" their business being to know accurately the person of every member, and to prevent the uninitiated from entering the precincts of the House, which they are taught to consider sacred. One of them is a character: a short, stout, bustling-dignified personage, with magnificent silver hair, and a rubicund countenance, indicative of such port as the Bellamy of olden time was wont to supply. He is a relic of the unreformed House; of the times when a good door-keeper was considered to be worth something like £1000 a year; remembers Pitt and Fox, doubtless has original anecdotes of Sheridan, and looks on modern members as a set of innovating boys, over whom he is entitled to exercise a dictatorial authority; evidently believes that he is an important and indispensable part of the Legislature, if not an institution himself. Any one who wishes to know what doorkeepers who have a true sense of their duty are, should try to walk into the House, not being a member. The other is a most respectable and civil person, very intelligent as to all that relates to the House, and has risen to his present office by long service and good conduct in other positions in the messenger department, and holds it under the reformed and reduced system of remuneration. He succeeded an official who was, in many respects,

identical in character with the elder dignitary above described; he had the same silver hair, perhaps a little more abundant, the same rubicund countenance; but he was tall and thin; and, although quite as dignified and impenetrable, perhaps not quite so irascible, as his shorter coadjutor. When sitting together, in their large chairs, on each side of the door, they seem to have adopted as their model a poetical notion of Minos and Rhadamanthus, in all their sternness and severity of aspect, and really did their parts very well.

In the Lobby, from about half-past three on every day that the House sits, the scene is much the same, but that same is very characteristic of the place. Grouped about, but kept within such bounds as to leave a reasonable space for the movements of members from the three doors more immediately appropriated to them, by the picked policemen whose duty is in the Palace of Westminster, are to be found Parliamentary agents, solicitors, a stray Parliamentary barrister or two, parties interested in private bills, railway directors and secretaries, deputations from constituencies who have brought up petitions to be presented by their members, acquaintances of members looking out for orders for the Strangers' Gallery; now and then, two or three ladies smuggled in by members to get a peep at the House, if the dignified door-keeper is in a good humour; correspondents of provincial, Scotch, and Irish newspapers, watching for any decision on a private bill, or the asking of any question in which their localities may be interested, and with which they will rush off to the Telegraph-office; and hangers-on upon members, with hopes of fulfilled promises kindling in their countenances (it is astonishing how much a number of persons evidently of this kind have to say to the Irish members). Then there are Quaker and cotton-spinning looking men from Lancashire, on the look-out for the northern borough members; agricultural-aspect, well-fed aspirants for a word or two with Mr. Newdegate or Mr. Christopher; black-coated and white-cravated individuals, who will inevitably pounce on Sir Robert Inglis or Mr. Spooner; there are sanitary and sewer-cleansing countenances, which may be found in close contact with Sir Benjamin Hall or Sir De Lucy Evans; while every class seems, at one time or the other, to have something to say to Mr. Brotherton, who rushes in and out of the door like one possessed: this is because he moves the first and second reading of almost every private bill. Gliding in and out of every group, with a self-possessed and smiling air, may be seen Mr. Hayter, the "whipper-in" of the Government, dropping a word, in passing, or, it may be, giving a significant look to each member of his party whom he encounters; while Colonel Forrester and Mr. Bateson, who hold similar offices under the Opposition, are equally assiduous, although there may be more of a *laissez-aller* tone in their manner of proceeding, for they need not be officially anxious—it is not now their business to see that the Government is not beaten on a division.

All the while members are passing in from the private entrance, entering the House, or going to the Post-office, or the Vote-paper Office, or proceeding to the Library, and, it may be, sustaining nature at the very well-arranged refreshment-stand which occupies one angle of the Lobby. As any by-stander sees his man come in, he pounces upon him, and carries him, often seeming very loth, into a corner for the intended conference. Sometimes, as a distinguished personage—such as Lord John Russell, Mr. Disraeli, or Lord Palmerston—passes through the clear area before the door of the House, there is a buzz and a whispering, and nudging of the sight-seers, and an eager straining of the eyes for such a glimpse of the interior of the Chamber as the swinging open of the door momentarily affords. This sort of bustle, without confusion—for everything is kept subdued and decorous—goes on till about six o'clock; when all private bills, petitions, questioning of Ministers, and the preliminaries of the business of the night are disposed of, and the House settled down into the orders of the day; the temporary visitors then clear off, and for the rest of the evening the Lobby is tenanted chiefly by the privileged and of-right occupants of the House and its appurtenances, and those who have business connected with the debates on hand.

The earliest assembled lookers-on in the afternoon, at a quarter before four o'clock, are always startled by a loud cry of "Mr. Speaker," which reverberates through the corridor leading to the Library, which is taken up by the door-keepers in the Lobby, followed by the order of "Hats off." In solemn procession then passes the first commoner of England, in flowing wig and silken gown, accompanied by the Serjeant-at-Arms, bearing the massive mace (the same, by the way, which Cromwell treated with such little respect), and supported by train-bearers, and his chaplain—all in that traditional suit of black cut-away coat, knee-breeches, and buckles, which seem inalienably engrafted on the English Constitution. Bowing gracefully, and with a pleasant smile on his handsome countenance, the right honourable gentleman passes on and enters the House, the portals of which are firmly closed until prayers are over.

Decidedly, the House of Commons is fortunate in its choice of a Speaker. It may be absurd, but the association of official dignity with a tall figure and commanding presence is very prevalent. Mr. Shaw Lefevre is far above the middle height, his figure is straight and well set up (he is a distinguished yeomanry cavalry officer), and his limbs well made; while, strange to say, he looks better in his official costume, which would not be becoming to every-body, than in his ordinary dress. His countenance is expressive of that which he possesses in perfection, good humour, and command of temper, while his tact, acquired in the exercise of the duties of his office, is unbounded, and it is a tradition of the House that no one has ever been offended with him under any circumstances whatever. His voice is good—loud and sonorous, but with the defect of a slight indistinctness of utterance. Altogether he is a model Speaker, and it will be difficult to replace him, whether as regards his perfect knowledge of his duties or his personal qualifications. Apart from the mere prestige of a fine-looking man in the chair, a good "physique" is indispensable to such a position in a place like the House of Commons, where so much of the physical element prevails. Indeed, until last session, it was a positive part of the duty of the Speaker never to be ill, for there was no provision for carrying on the business of the House in his absence, and it is not a House, unless the Speaker is in the chair. Oddly enough, the instances of absences of Speakers from illness have been so rare as almost to be unheard of. This question was wisely and indeed mercifully considered last session; and, for the future, arrangements may be made to relieve the Speaker from the necessity of dying at his post rather than stop the proceedings of the House.

But the right honourable gentleman has been supposed to have gone into the House; and we will take the liberty of preceding him there, and finding out what manner of place it is which is awaiting in silent emptiness his arrival. The first thing that would occur to a stranger on entering the House of Commons, must be that it is the oddest and most incomprehensible apartment that ever was seen. It is strictly like nothing that ever was built before. It has no shape. It is not square, and it is not oblong, and if it resembles in its outline in any degree any other room in which a number of persons were to assemble, it is the old-fashioned Dissenting chapels, which were erected before Baptists and Independents had acquired architectural tastes, and when it was thought that plainness in buildings devoted to the worship of God should degenerate into downright unshapely ugliness. Look at the House of Commons as regards its size, and it will be found that it is positively very small; it looks cramped, "cribbed, cabined, caged, confined,

bound in." One thinks it must certainly have been built under great pressure and difficulty; there must have been an insurmountable want of space for the ground-plan, and the architect had to do his best to deal with the exigency. But then it may occur to one to remember that the New Palace of Westminster stands on an area of about eight acres, has four principal fronts, and contains within its area no less than eleven quadrangles or courts for the admission of light and air to the numberless rooms, residences, and offices, of which, besides the two Houses and their adjuncts, it is made up. Some idea may be formed of the intricacy and extent of its plan, when it is known that it contains no less than 500 rooms of all kinds, with separate residences, some of them of large size, for eighteen different officers of the Houses of Lords and Commons, besides a chapel for the use of the residents in the building; and it was all built because of this particularly small and mean-looking room. If it had not been for this place, there would have been no occasion for a Legislative Palace at all. The stranger cannot tell what it all means. Why such an expenditure of time, money, space, skill, art decoration on this huge edifice, if that part of it which is, so to speak, its very heart, and ought to be its real climax, is so narrow and small, and in spite of some attempt at ornament, which in such a room is but a mockery, bears itself so poorly? The only conclusion one can readily arrive at is, that Sir Charles Barry is an architectural humourist, and intended the House to be typical of the legislation which is carried on in it—which always is proposed to be comprehensive and expansive, but is practically narrow and circumscribed.

The fact is, that the House is what is called, in naval architecture, a "razee;" that is, a large room cut down to a small one, with much the same effect as is observable in ship-building. It was originally lofty and well proportioned; of the same height, and little less dimensions, than the House of Lords; and would have been—though a more simple—in its way, quite as handsome and imposing a chamber. But, long ere its shell was finished, the initiated discovered that the important question of hearing was involved, and that size and space must be made subservient to that vital point; and then first commenced the reduction of extent. When the House of Lords was opened for business, its vast dimensions were found incompatible with anything like an accurate hearing of the speaker; and, great state-room as it is, even there some alteration was found to be indispensable. When, however, the House of Commons was temporarily fitted for a trial of its capabilities, preparatory to its actual opening, it was ascertained that not one-half of what was said reached the region set apart for the representatives of the Fourth Estate; and, though that might be comparatively of no consequence in the House of Lords—which the Commons are apt to consider a combination of a registry-office and a show-room—here the speaking was intended, if not for the country, at least for the constituencies, and must be heard. There was a perfect panic among honourable members. The architect was commanded, on pain of penalties too tremendous to be named, to accomplish this object, at any sacrifice of appearance or comfort. Hints were given to the House that the faculties of the professors of architecture in this country might be quickened if one of their number was hanged. In fine, Sir Charles Barry set to work: he lowered the roof, cutting the height of the building nearly in two; divided the windows, leaving only the lower part of them visible in the House; the galleries at both ends were thrown forward, and the length of the room materially diminished; and, at last, he succeeded in locating the Commons of England in a chamber in which, certainly, every word that anyone speaks is a tolerably distinct and audible voice may be heard; but which presents an aspect as comical and eccentric as can be found out of China.

Of the eight acres of the ground-plan of the New Palace at Westminster, there is reserved for the House of Commons a space 75 feet long and 45 feet wide; while the height from the floor to the centre of the ceiling is 41 feet. This ceiling is a very singular composition altogether: it is flat in the centre, and the sides slope down to about half-way of the original walls and windows. It is divided into compartments, the prevailing colour being bright oak; and each compartment is ornamented with large roses, thistles, and shamrocks, the cornices being, as usual in all the decorations of the building, mottoes, such as "Dieu et mon Droit," "Domine fac salvam Reginam," &c. Seen by daylight, the flat centre of the roof looks as if it had been washed, and the colour driven out by the process. The fact is, that the whole of it is composed of ground-glass, the pattern and ornaments being very slightly tinted; as it is from hence that, by an ingenious process (the invention, we believe, of Mr. Goldsworthy Gurney), the House is entirely lighted. At night the whole flat centre of the ceiling is filled with a soft, pleasant light, something like very strong moonlight. The effect is not brilliant, and is not intended to be, but the light is quite sufficient for all purposes of reading and writing, and avoids successfully all oppressiveness to the eye. There was no other lighting whatever, not a lamp or candle all over the House, until last session, when some burners were placed behind the pillars at the back of the Gallery, to which point the light of the roof does not penetrate. It is not an improvement, and it is understood that it was only done to enable the Speaker to see the members who sat darkling there; and as no one else wishes to disturb their personal or artificial obscurity, it would be better if the plan was discontinued.

On both sides of the House a range of benches, covered with green leather, and having comfortable stuffed backs, rise in tiers from the floor to a point far under the Galleries. At the north end stands the Speaker's seat, a sort of canopied throne, which bears evident marks of an intention that it was to have been a handsome and ornamental appendage to the House, but now appears as if it was pared down to meet the exigency as regards space which prevails all over the building, in which, vast as it is, every room for every purpose is cramped and insufficient. Even in the House of Lords, which alone has any pretensions to size, the principle of paring down has been carried out in the accommodation below the Bar; and it may be mentioned that the artists who were entrusted with the execution of the statues of the Barons who procured Magna Charta, and which fill the niches in the Lords' Chamber, were restricted to a certain width across the shoulders of the figures. The chair itself, in which the Speaker sits, is, however, one of the only things that is too roomy; for, in order to occupy any other position except a bolt upright one, its occupant must loll across it at right angles. Exactly in front of the Speaker is the Clerks' table. This piece of furniture is both too large and too small. It affords scanty room for the three clerks, who always sit in a row, at that end of it which is next the Speaker; and it occupies so much of the floor between the Treasury Bench and the front row of the Opposition seats, that every one who walks by on either side of it to reach the Speaker's chair, or the outlets from the House behind it, causes a movement of the outstretched legs of the sitters on those uneasy benches, who must draw them up close to avoid being kicked.

Exactly in the centre of the House, the seats are divided, and a passage between them reaches up to the last row under the Gallery. This is what, in the parlance of the House, is called the "Gangway." At the southern end, near the door leading into the Lobby, on the right of the entrance, is the raised arm-chair of the Serjeant-at-Arms; and on the other side is a similarly enclosed seat, which belongs to nobody, but is only placed there for uniformity sake; and by the side of it is a small table on which cards and notes for members, sent in by persons waiting to see them in the Lobby are placed. Between these two seats is the "Bar"—on ordinary occasions an imaginary line, like Holborn Bars or Smithfield Bars; but, when persons are summoned thither, whom the rules of the House

do not permit to go beyond that point, two sliding rods of brass are drawn, like telescopes, from both sides, and meeting in the centre, a material "Bar" is temporarily formed. Behind the Bar, and under the South Gallery, on each side of the entrance doors, are two rows of benches enclosed, which are appropriated to Peers, and which on nights of important debates are always filled with noble Lords belonging to the Government, and other distinguished members of the Upper House. Here, too, are constantly perched the Government prompters, and getters up of facts and statistics; and often, during the progress of a debate, a Chancellor of the Exchequer, or a President of the Board of Control, or Trade, or their secretaries, may be seen in earnest conversation with quiet-looking men, who have been sitting gravely observant of the proceedings; and after that, you may be sure, the Opposition member who has at that moment made a hit, will find that the member of the Government who has just glided into his seat, has got a note of the point, with the answer to it ready for his reply.

The Galleries are an important feature in the arrangement of the House, and are divided into several. One gallery, with a double tier of seats, runs along each side of the House, which is set apart for the use of members. Half-a-dozen doors opening into them lead into very comfortable, handsomely-fitted up, and well-lighted retiring-rooms, where reading, writing, and chatting may be carried on by large or small parties with great convenience. These two galleries communicate at the south end. Here, just over the Bar, is a deep gallery, extending a very considerable way back: the front row, which is separated from the rest by the passage by which the two members' galleries meet, is set apart for the use of the diplomatic corps and distinguished foreigners, but is often occupied by Peers. It was here that the Earl of Derby sat, leaning far over into the House, listening to Mr. Disraeli's first budget, in April, 1852, when he astonished every one by the uncompromising testimony which he bore to the benefits derived from Free-trade; and on which occasion Lord Derby is reported to have said to the Bishop of Oxford, who was sitting next him, in the language of Scripture, "Behold, we hired this man to curse them, and he has altogether blessed them." In this gallery, last session, two East Indian gentlemen of dignified appearance, and wearing the rich costume of their country, sat, night after night, during the discussions on the India Bill, apparently deeply impressed with the character of the proceedings, principally from their being unacquainted with the language in which they were conducted. Behind this row is a considerable space, called the Speaker's Gallery, which is reserved for those who have orders from the right hon. gentleman; and between this and the wall, or rather the ornamented stone screen, surmounted by a lattice of brass-work, which terminates the interior of the House, is the Stranger's Gallery, to which persons are admitted with members' orders. Over the Speaker's Chair is the Reporters' Gallery.

For the first time in the history of Parliament a specific place has been assigned for the use of ladies; but, as this is still considered against Parliamentary regulations, and as they are only there as it were, by a courteous violation of rule, their seats are placed behind the ornamental brass trellis, in the stone screen, just over the Reporters' Gallery. Nothing can, therefore, be seen of them; and their *locale* has been facetiously described by an honourable member as "something between a nunnery and bird-cage." The accommodation for them is, however, very good. Their gallery is divided into three compartments, each containing one row of chairs; and there are commodious anterooms attached. There is no difficulty in seeing, and most probably none of hearing, through the interstices of the trellis-work; but it is to be feared that the arrangements do not quite satisfy the fair occupants of the place; for, painful as it is to record, they are very apt to keep up a continuous chatter during the most important speeches, to the dire confusion and distress of the reporters—a proof that they do not hear sufficiently well to have their attention entirely absorbed; while it is also to be feared that they are not content with the loopholes through which they get a view of the House, for they are continually breaking off leaves of the shamrocks and roses of which the brass lattice is composed, which usually fall outwards, and with their sharp ends downwards, on the heads of the occupiers of the back bench in the Reporters' Gallery. They might, perhaps, be more satisfied if they could compare their present accommodation with that afforded to ladies in the old house, which was in the space above the roof over the chandeliers, which acted as a ventilator.

Although the House of Commons is more plainly decorated—at least, as respects colour and gilding—than the House of Lords, it will be found, on a close examination of the delicate carving with which it is covered, that on every portion of it there has been expended no less an amount of thought and labour. The prevailing oak colour is heightened to a slight extent by the decorated panels of the ceiling, and the emblazoning of the coats of arms, which bear the Royal cognizances of the Sovereigns of England, in succession, arranged along the front of the Galleries. It is understood that the architect proposes to decorate, in colour, on a gold ground, the coved under-side of the Galleries, emblazoning thereon the armorial bearings of the Speakers, in chronological order, in the same way as has been done with the coats of arms of the Chancellors in the House of Lords; but as yet nothing has been done except to prepare the ground, it being a question whether, by gaining in splendour, the House would not appear to lose its business-like character.

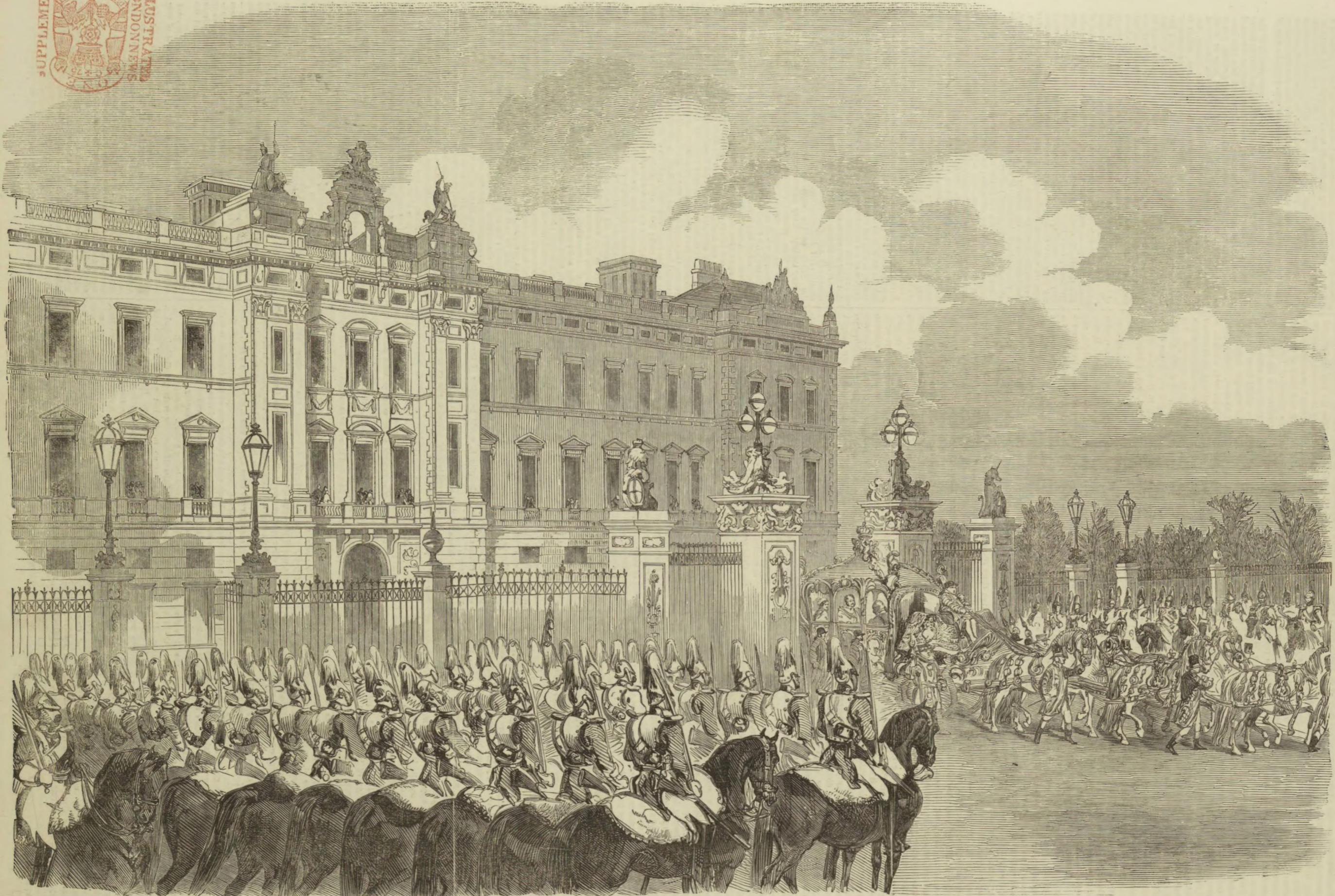
The windows of the House are filled with stained glass, the devices being the armorial bearings of boroughs, beginning with Westminster. The supporters are intensely grotesque, the mediæval designs being carried to the utmost limits. The supporters, in the case of maritime boroughs, are horses with fishes' tails; those of the inland boroughs, a sort of leopardised lions; and those of the Universities are saints. Sundry and manifold have been the gibes and jeers at these strange beasts, when members, as they often do, get a fit of abusing their House: so much so that, previous to last session, on one side these heraldic supporters were removed, and the shields and crests were rested on scrolls entwined with roses, thistles, and shamrocks. On the other side, however, up to last August, the fierce animals in question retained their rampant positions.

It should be said that none of the windows about the building are ever opened; the first principle of the ventilation employed being the rigorous exclusion of the external air. That being effected; by a complex and expensive apparatus, an artificial atmosphere is created, which consists of alternate blasts of hot and cold air, infused by imperceptible crannies in the flooring from the machinery below; thermometers are hung in all parts of the House, corridors, and lobbies, and a staff of officials continually visit them, and give notice of the alterations required to keep up an equable temperature. Of course, however, no hot or cold blast can be forced into the rooms without, at least, a temporary sensation of what is going on, and the effect is anything but agreeable. Another consequence of never opening the windows is, that during the day, the artificial atmosphere not being in operation, there is a subsiding of the impure air necessarily generated in crowded and lighted apartments, and a sickly vault-like smell pervades the place which is most unpleasant. In order to facilitate the issue of warm and cold air through the flooring, which, by-the-by, is formed of perforated cast-iron plates; a coarse pervious matting, looking like ill-washed sack-cloth, is spread over the area of the House. Nothing can have a meaner or more unsightly appearance, while its aptitude for generating dust is immense, and loudly complained of. If the account thus given of the aspect of the Chamber in which the Commons of England assemble, be at all intelligible, there can be little doubt that it will be allowed that the case against it is made out, namely, that it is the oddest and most absurd apartment in the world.

Along both sides of the House are the Division Lobbies: that on the west side being usually appropriated to the "Ayes," and that on the east, to the "Noes." These corridors are plainly and substantially fitted up with oak paneling, the windows being filled with stained glass; stairs at each end communicate with the Members' Galleries above. At the Speaker's end of the House, behind the chair, are two small chambers—one for the use of the members of the Government, to hold conferences with each other during debates, if necessary; and the other is appropriated to the Opposition for similar purposes. The door behind the chair also affords access by means of a long corridor to the Speaker's private rooms, and the official residences of the Librarian, the Clerks, and the Serjeant-at-Arms.

Such being the Chamber, with its appurtenances, we will proceed with an attempt to give some notion of the style and manner of conducting the public business therein.

It is twenty minutes to four o'clock. The House is swept and garnished, and a solemn silence prevails. If the season be so far advanced as that at hour it is daylight, the place looks like a theatre or Vauxhall by daylight. In truth, it is prepared and got up only for night work. It has been often asked why is all important legislation carried on by night? and jokes have been made about "after dinner" enactments, and statutes smacking as much of the wine-cup as of the midnight oil. But it is really a necessity. As yet no man wholly devotes himself to membership as a profession. The only persons in the House who are paid are those in the Government, and the day is hardly sufficient for the discharge of the duties of their departments and prepa-



OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.—HER MAJESTY LEAVING BUCKINGHAM PALACE



OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.—THE ROYAL PROCESSION PASSING WHITEHALL.

ration for Parliamentary debates, and by this alone their salaries are fairly earned; so that even they perform their legislative functions in a manner gratis. No other member is paid for his services, and all have some other vocation. There are merchants and professional men of all sorts, who have their own business to attend to; the landed squires are by no means idle men in any sense of the word; and if there are a few members who are idlers by profession, ten to one but they are of that very hardworking set, the "men of fashion," who go into the House because it is the right thing, and during the session is a sort of club, which is really an agreeable change from the regular ones in which they lounge all the rest of the year. Every one of these persons has something to do for himself in the mornings. Even if he has not, every legislator is condemned "a double debt to pay" in his capacity of member. Private business has demands on one of his functions, public business on the other. The mornings he must give up to individuals, companies, and corporations; working laboriously in Committees on Private Bills, from eleven to four. The evenings must be devoted to the nation, in the discussion and enactment of public bills, and this for at least six months of the year.

To return, however, to the empty House. If an important and interesting debate is expected, a temporary fit of pietiness seizes a number of members, and they get into the House at this hour, in order to be present at the prayers with which business always opens—because, if they do, they have the privilege of affixing a card to the back of any seat they may select, which secures it to them the rest of the evening; but no one is allowed to reserve a seat after prayers. If it is an ordinary occasion, half a dozen is a large muster. Next drop in, wigged and gowned, the Clerks, who have seats at the table. At ten minutes to four the doors are thrown wide open, and a loud voice proclaims "Mr. Speaker." All the members present rise and stand uncovered, while the right honourable gentleman passes up the floor, accompanied by the Serjeant-at-Arms bearing the mace, each making three reverential bows—one at the bar, one in the middle of the House, and the third at the table. The Speaker takes his seat in one of the Clerks' chairs on the right side of the table; the mace is duly placed thereon; and, after a solemn pause, the Chaplain enters, makes the three customary bows as he advances, and having performed his duties, retires backwards again, bowing the prescribed number of times. The doors which have all this time been fast closed—no one being admitted during prayers—are opened; and the Speaker, still sitting at the table, proceeds to count the members present, and those who enter, until, reaching the number thirty-nine, he makes a sort of bow to himself, utters in a loud sonorous voice, the word "forty," leaves the table, and takes his seat in his own canopied chair, and technically "the House is made."

It is not a House unless forty members are present. This rule often leads to the phenomenon called "no House," which arises when four o'clock precisely arrives, and forty members are not present. The Speaker immediately leaves his place, the House without ceremony adjourns, and by no possibility can any business be done on that evening. The circumstance called "no House" seldom occurs in the beginning of the session. Then members are fresh, vigorous, and enthusiastic; committees and private business are not in full and exhausting play; the time of the year is unpropitious for afternoon rides; parties of pleasure in the day have not commenced; and in short, the "season" has not begun to exercise its influence on our legislators—very few of whom are quite exempt from its allurements. But when summer is in bloom, and the full-dress debates are pretty well over, while the real work of legislation—the whipping of measures into shape in committee—is in full operation (this being actually done by less than forty members), "no Houses" may be expected on those nights which do not belong to the Government.

It should be understood that at the commencement of the Session, on Mondays and Fridays, precedence is given to Government business, while Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, are appropriated to any measures or motions brought forward by private members. In June and July the Government takes Thursdays as well, and usually get their bills advanced a stage on Wednesdays also. But Tuesdays always remain the inalienable right of private members. Accordingly, at the advanced period of the session just indicated, private members and their motions become a bore; it is no business of the Government "Whipper-in" to see that a House is made (his duty on all Ministerial nights); nay, perhaps some motion is of a troublesome nature—will require explanations from the Government—which will lead to a debate which "can't possibly have any result at that time of the year"; and so the said adroit functionary may even employ some of the persuasion with which he is so highly gifted to induce honourable gentlemen to stay away about four o'clock.

It generally happens on "no House" nights that the first motion on the paper is in the name of some member who has not a sufficient number of personal friends to make a House for him, and the subject is one in which no one takes any interest but himself; and, although there may lurk behind it a notice of more importance, and with a name of more weight attached to it, the friends of this latter member, although well canvassed to come down and make a House, may think that the owner of the first motion will do it, and so don't attend punctually; and the result is, less than forty members at four o'clock. On such occasions, the knowing ones always perceive a certain something about the appearance of things in the Lobby which they easily interpret. There is such an innocent air of unconsciousness about the "Whipper-in," who does not lounge about with a careless grace, as on those evenings when he knows the "orders of the day" will make a House for themselves. Nay, he is evidently eager and anxious to get together the requisite number of members for the honourable gentleman, who is, perhaps, not able to do it for himself; for he speaks impressively to every one who is about to pass into the House; he is evidently "whipping him in." But, somehow, one after the other, those very gentlemen pause, look about the Lobby for a moment, and then glide gently into the corridor leading to the refreshment-rooms, and are seen no more. The doors are opened after prayers; few and far between are the passers into the House; the clock stands on the stroke of four; there is a stir within the House; the principal doorkeeper uproariously shouts out, "who goes home?" a schoolboy air of holiday enjoyment pervades the atmosphere; every one looks relieved and happy except the honourable gentlemen who have motions on the list; they gather up their papers, dash on their hats, and stride away, looking unutterable things at every one they meet in the vicinity of the House; and will perhaps send the names of the Members present at the time of the necessary adjournments to the newspaper, besides bringing the matter indignantly before the House at the sitting next day, by which course, it should be said, they don't improve their chances on a future occasion.

In the last Session it was only on one occasion that there was "no House." It may be accounted for by the fact of its being the first Session of a new Parliament; and besides, the general election resulted in the return of a great number of fresh members, most of them young men, who were delighted with the House and their new avocations, and many of them with their vigour unabated by their labours in the committee-rooms, were quite ready to rush down to the House on being informed "that the Speaker was at prayers," the technical way of ordering Committees to adjourn.

Assuming, however, that no such misfortune intervenes, and that the Speaker is enabled to get safely into the chair, the business of the evening forthwith commences. The first thing done, if occasion requires it, is the swearing in of new members. The neophyte is waiting in the seats under the Gallery beyond the Bar, when Mr. Speaker cries out, "Members to be sworn to come to the table." Whereupon he puts himself at the Bar, and is there joined by two members—one usually a personal friend, and the other the "whipper in" of the party to which he belongs. Supported thus on each side, he advances with the three bows to the table, where, having handed in a statement of his qualification, he takes the oath of allegiance and supremacy, signs the Parliamentary rolls, and, having shaken hands with the right hon. gentleman in the chair, is, to all intents and purposes, a working member.

Although this is usually a ceremony that attracts little notice; yet, when a man who is popular, either in the House or the country, is sworn in; or when his election has been the result of some party triumph, there is a good deal of cheering, from a House fuller than usual, at that hour. The most exciting incidents of this kind of late years have occurred when the Jewish members have presented themselves to test their right to sit in the House. In the first case—that of Baron Rothschild—the proceedings, after he came to the table, were stopped by his demanding to be sworn on the Old Testament—a book which Sir Robert Inglis said he did not believe was in the library of the House. That question was, therefore, to be discussed, in his absence; and it was amusing to observe the effect which the curt formula, "You may withdraw," always used by the Speaker in turning any one out of the House, had upon the richest man in Europe. As is well known, after debate, the Baron was allowed to be sworn on the Old Testament; but on his sticking fast at the concluding words of the oaths, "on the true faith of a Christian," he again heard the loud words of dismissal; and, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts which were then, and have since been, made on behalf of him and those of his persuasion, he has never yet got beyond the seat under the Gallery, where, however, he may often be seen.

The next ordinary proceeding is what is called "Private Business"—that is, the passing of Private Bills through their different stages. It may as well be said that, from the sitting of the House until nearly five o'clock, it presents the appearance of being the abode of a set of unrestrained lunatics. Every body is talking—everybody is running in or out of the doors in the Lobby and behind the chair—coming up to the table and writing their names on lists for the guidance of the Speaker in the presentation of petitions and notices of motion; and, if the House of Commons might be supposed to have a patron saint, one, at that moment, would unquestionably fix on St. Vitus as being that saint. From amidst the din there rises the voice of the Speaker, shouting continuously, "Mr. Brotherton," and that excellent and indefatigable member may be seen, at each utterance of his name, rushing from the bar to the table with a paper in his hand. He is, in fact, bringing up and moving the first reading of "Private Bills," of almost the whole of which he has the charge. His exhausting runs at length concluded he takes his seat on the Treasury bench, and the clerk at the table calls out in succession the titles of more bills, and the same hon. member moves that each be "read a second time," and referred to Select Committees, all of which is repeated each time by the Speaker, with the invariable refrain "those that are of that opinion say 'Aye,' contrary opinion say 'No'—the Ayes have it." The right honourable gentleman has this formula to utter, not only at each stage of the private bills, but on the presentation of every petition, so that the repetition would be very tiresome if any body attended to it.

Usually, private bills pass through the first and second readings without discussion, the ordeal they have to undergo in the Select Committees being mostly sufficient to satisfy the parties concerned. Sometimes, however, the opponents of such a bill endeavour to stop it on the second reading, and in such cases there will be found appended to its title in the list of the day the words "by order." Some member moves that it be read a second time "that day six months" (the Parliamentary paraphrase for "never," or, what is much the same thing, "next session"), and smart and rapid debates, which are sharpened by the infusion of local influences and asperities, ensue, ending in divisions. This is, however, the exception, and Mr. Brotherton generally gets through the first, second, and third readings of his different private bills, which require to be respectively passed through those stages in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

Then comes the presentation of petitions, which, of the many Parliamentary farces, is, apparently, the most farcical. The Speaker, from a written list, calls out the names of members in succession. At each call some one rises, and mumbles out a few words, of which the only one usually heard is just that which nobody wants to hear, namely the word "petition." In nineteen cases out of twenty, what it is about, or where it comes from, is not heard. So unintelligible is the whole affair, that in order to give publicity to petitions an active officer of the House has adopted the plan of spending the greater part of his evenings in copying the subject of each petition, the place it comes from, and the member presenting it, on separate slips of paper, which are sent *en masse* to every newspaper; and thus they appear, to the satisfaction of constituents and members. No power of reporting could effect anything of consequence in the matter. As the substance of the petition is stated, the Speaker desires the member "to bring it up," and puts the question "that it do lie on the table," with the customary appeal for the verdict of the House, terminating with the ever-lasting "the Ayes have it."

As soon as the presentation is over, a messenger comes in with a couple of carpet-bags, into which he shoves the petitions very unceremoniously, and walks off with them. Unimposing as this procedure is, it is not without its significance and weight; and, of late years, the withdrawal of more than one important measure has been the result of the petitions presented against it; while, of the strengthening effect of petitions in favour of a bill, there can be no doubt. Some sessions ago, when a monster petition from the Chartists was presented by Mr. Thomas Duncombe, it was brought in on strong poles by four or five messengers, and occupied a considerable portion of the floor, while much laughter was caused when the Speaker desired the honourable gentleman "to bring it up;" a matter beyond Mr. Duncombe's power, though he has done some wonderful things in his day. The city of London has the privilege of presenting petitions—not through a member of the House, but by the Sheriffs, who appear at the bar in full official costume, and hand in the documents.

By the time the petitions are disposed of, it is half past four or a quarter to five, and the hubbub has subsided; the House is full, the Minister and chiefs of the Opposition have come in, and all the notable members are in their usual places. The Speaker then proceeds to call for "Notices of Motion." The Notices of Motion do not occupy much time or attract much attention, unless something remarkable is indicated by the Ministry or leaders of the Opposition, and even then the interest is but momentary. Their time will come.

On the proceedings which immediately follow attention is concentrated, for the Ministry is to undergo a series of questions, on all possible subjects, which they are to satisfy as they best may. No moment could be better chosen for a characteristic view of the House of Commons than this. Everybody is there, and almost everybody with his hat on—a custom originating, most likely, in the want of convenient places where to bestow those incomprehensible coverings of the head. It looks odd and undignified, but the plan has its merits, too, inasmuch as it makes all the members look profound, and the Ministers impenetrable. By-the-by, Mr. Disraeli never wears his hat, but always stows it away under his seat as soon as he reaches his place. The Treasury bench is full, very full; indeed its limits are far too contracted for all its occupants in and out of the Cabinet. About the centre sits Lord John Russell, his hat pulled down over his brow and down to his ears, his arms folded across his chest, always seeming very tired and listless. On his left is Lord Palmerston, in the easy attitude so natural to him, with an air of quiet readiness for anything that is said to him; and on his right is Sir James Graham, his hat placed rather on the back of his head, and a perpetual lazy smile upon his lips. Sir James, despite his still stalwart figure, begins to look old in the face. Beyond Lord Palmerston is to be seen the eager intelligence of Mr. Gladstone's countenance, toned down by the solemnity of his neighbours, Mr. Cardwell and Mr. J. Wilson, the Secretary to the Treasury, beyond whom, up to the end of the bench next the chair usually congregate, accommodated as well as may be, Mr. F. Peel, Sir J. Young, and the law officers for England and Scotland. Below Sir James Graham may generally be seen Mr. Sydney Herbert, Sir William Molesworth, with his singular hat and *prononcé* hair and eye-glass, even at this hour verging towards that state of lethargy which he appears to think the normal condition of a Cabinet Minister in Parliament. Then comes Sir Charles Wood, who always contrives to have his secretary, Mr. Lowe, next to him; Mr. Strutt, emulative of Sir W. Molesworth in the sleeping department; Admiral Berkeley, and Mr. Fitzroy, the active Under Secretary for the Home Department, and Mr. W. Cooper; then come Mr. Grenville Berkeley and the Earl of Mulgrave, the ready coadjutors of Mr. Secretary to the Treasury, Hayter, in the "whipping-in" business—this latter gentleman never sits down, but is in a constant state of vibration between the Treasury bench and the Lobby. Mr. Bernal Osborne, Mr. Charles Villiers, Mr. Keogh, Mr. Monsell, and Mr. Sadler, do not appear to frequent the Ministerial bench, except at such times as their own departmental affairs are in progress. On the second bench, immediately behind the last Ministerial seat at the "Gangway," is the prescriptive seat of Mr. Hume, the father of every sort of reform; and beyond him, towards the Speaker, usually sit Sir Joshua Walmsley, Mr. Ewart, Mr. Aglionby, Mr. Horsman, Mr. Peto, Dr. R. Phillimore, Sir James Weir Hogg, Mr. Oliveira, Sir James Anderson, Mr. Hastie, Mr. Glynn, Mr. W. Brown, Mr. Headlam, Mr. Dunlop, Lord Monk, and Mr. Brotherton, whose labours in the cause of private business, accompanied by advancing years, seem to have somewhat diminished his zeal for moving the adjournment of the House at a reasonable hour; indeed, the sittings of the last session fairly swamped him, and he gave up the task altogether. In the centre of the second bench Mr. Macaulay has taken his place, on the few occasions that he has spoken in the present Parliament. On the third bench, exactly behind Mr. Hume, may always be found Mr. W. Williams, the Member for Lambeth. Near him usually sit his colleague, Mr. W. A. Wilkinson, Mr. Duncan, Mr. John M'Gregor, &c. But about its centre this bench becomes classical. After the fall of the Peel Ministry, Sir James Graham set the fashion of ex-Ministers sitting on the third bench: and here, accordingly, we find those members of Lord John Russell's Government whom it was found impossible to include in the arrangement of the present Ministry, comprising Lord Seymour, Mr. Vernon Smith, Mr. Labouchere, Sir George Grey, Sir Francis Baring, Mr. Edward Ellice, and Mr. Tuffnell; and near them—although he evidently does not wish to be thought of them—almost the only immediate follower of Sir R. Peel, for whom no place has been found—Mr. Goulburn. The other benches are always well filled; but the most noticeable point about them is that Mr. Thomas Duncombe, the greatest tactician, and one of the greatest humourists, in the House, and consequently one of its best-listened-to members, has chosen to locate himself nearly on the last bench, under the gallery near the

gangway, where despite of impaired health and strength, he ever and anon delivers himself of his epigrammatic jocularities, which differ from most jestings, inasmuch as they always bear direct upon the question at issue.

Below the "Gangway" on the Ministerial side, the appropriation and reservation of seats by a courteous prescription, obtains almost as much as on the Government bench itself. In the corner seat in the first row, until now always sat Sir Robert Inglis, one of the members for the University of Oxford; chief champion of the Church; opposer of all religious innovations—the admission of Jews into Parliament in particular. He looked as if intended by nature for a dignified Abbot, his fine smooth bald head, wearing the very appearance of the tonsure (he was far too old-fashioned ever to keep his hat on in a room); and no one ever remembers to have seen him, no matter what the season of the year, without a flower in his button-hole. Next to him, there shone day by day, as remarkable, but a very different kind of head. That of Sir Robert Inglis is globular, and without angles, the face placid, and the expression that of repose; while the head and features of Mr. Henry Drummond, his invariable next neighbour, are sharply cut and defined, and the whole expression bearing the aspect of intellect and taste, cultivated to the highest point of refinement. He is the most eccentric speech-maker in the House—the very Cain of debate, for "his hand is against every man." He never rises but to sneer at all public virtue, and to tell the House that it is a mass of corruption; but that, nevertheless, he rather likes them for it. No one can tell what his political creed is, for he alternately supports and opposes all questions; but he is always listened to, for he is always amusing; and, though somewhat bitter, not ill-natured; while, in private life, he is understood to be delightful. To sum up his eccentricities, it may be stated that he is, by religious profession, an Irvingite; and, consequently, the antithesis of the unbending Church of Englandism of Sir R. Inglis. Next to Mr. Drummond is generally to be found Mr. Austen Layard, whose far-Eastern travel—his having been an attaché of the Embassy at Constantinople, and his not having been re-appointed under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, an office he held for a short time under Lord John Russell's Ministry—erected him last session into the popular interpellator on the lagging Russia and Turkey question.

Beyond him, on this row, down to the Bar, is a knot of the youngest members of the House, the product of the last general election—enthusiastic representatives, ready for every subject, and generally taking part in every debate. If it would not be irreverent, one might call this the "Chatter-bench." Here, as at an advanced outpost, unweary and vigilant, are stationed these dashing young "voltigeurs" of the House: perpetual is the skirmishing, and continuous the "crack," "crack," of the only weapons which they can use there. Here a good deal is said that is smart, showy, sounding well, often brilliant and effective; but, nevertheless, it does not impress the House; and so, not too much of it is recorded by the reporters, who know well what is worth writing down, which they judge of by the strictest House of Commons standard. It, however, temporarily amuses during parts of the evening that would otherwise be dull; and must be agreeable to Mr. Drummond, who was a Parliamentary "tirailleur" himself when younger, and whose onsets still rather partake of that style of fighting.

Among those indicated will be found Mr. Blackett, Mr. J. G. Phillips, Mr. Phynn, Mr. Danby Seymour, Mr. Ottaway, Mr. Cobbett, Mr. Crawford, Lord Goderich, Mr. J. Ball, Mr. Keating, &c.

On the second bench are compactly arranged the members of the Manchester school, supported and backed by the metropolitan members. There is Mr. Bright, with his thoroughly English look, and who, great as are his powers and abilities, has not thought it beneath him to study the peculiarities of the House of Commons, and has transformed himself, without losing one particle of his earnestness and vigour, from the declamatory platform orator into one of the soundest and most eloquent debaters extant. Next him is Mr. Cobden, with his shrewd half-sneering expression of face, listening to all the speakers as if he thought they were universally bent on setting political traps for "the people of this country;" never rising but to command attention; but not affecting to conceal that he cares nothing about the opinion of the House, but speaks to the country: as of proof of which he has often made great speeches about half past six, when everybody has gone to dinner. Flanking him is Mr. Milner Gibson, who, despite of his unmitigated and most out-spoken Radicalism, looks too much the *petit maître* really to be of the rough-and-ready Manchester school. There is Sir Benjamin Hall, the untiring discoverer of ecclesiastical abuses, and who says severe things about Bishops' incomes in the gentlest of voices, and who appears to dine out, or to be dined with, every day in the session; since he always comes down about half-past ten, in the fullest of full dresses; with him is Lord Dudley Stuart, his colleague—unwearied redresser of grievances and oppression, foreign and domestic. There is the mercurial member for Westminster, Sir John Shelley, who thinks his questions and motions during a session ought to be equal in number to his constituents; and the other member for that city, Sir De Lacy Evans, who seems to have brought with him from Spain a good deal of Spanish slowness and sententiousness. The Tower Hamlets and Finsbury have here reserved for them good places by Sir William Clay, Mr. C. Butler, and Alderman Challis; and the phalanx of metropolitan members is completed by Mr. Montague Chambers, the Liberal Member for Greenwich.

In this section of the House sit the Irish Members who support the Government; such as Mr. Vincent Scully, a wonderful speaker, for, in order to get rid of a debate on Maynooth, he once spoke from half-past twelve till six o'clock, on a Wednesday (when the House adjourns itself as of course), well knowing that there was not another day for renewing the debate that Session. Beside him are Mr. J. D. Fitzgerald, Mr. Pollard Urquhart, the O'Connells, Mr. F. Scully, &c.; in short, what are called the more reasonable Irishmen in Parliament. Here, too, may be found meek and sententious, but earnest, Mr. Miall, who contrives to get his anti-Church-State doctrines listened to, because he puts them forward so mildly and with such an evident desire not to do injustice to any one. Mr. Geach, Mr. James Bell, Mr. A. Anderson, Mr. Bass, Mr. Heywood, Mr. Crosley, Mr. Heywood, and many of the north of England members, congregate in this position; while the remarkable hat and hair of Mr. W. J. Fox (most essay-like of speakers), if not always here, is just on the other side of the "Gangway," in close contact with the knowing "chapeau français," and "Antinous"-like curls of Mr. Thomas Duncombe; near whom also generally flutters Mr. Apsley Pellatt, the new member for Southwark; while from the darkness of the back bench under the gallery near the "Gangway" is seen to loom the magnificent beard, and to tower the grand form of Mr. Muntz, the Currency member for Birmingham.

Combined with all these—who are more or less notabilities, and who are sought by the eye of the stranger—are to be found a number of sensible, practical, hard-working men, who care little for the show department of membership, but sedulously apply themselves to the work of Committees, both "select" and of "the whole House," who labour while your prating representative dines; who sit out the last days of the session, when their value is duly appreciated by the over-fatigued Government officials; who are selected for chairmen of all sorts of committees; and, in short are those who do the busyness of Parliament, as contradistinguished from its talk. You may not see long reports of speeches attached to the names of Mr. Thorneley, Mr. T. Greene, Mr. Ingham, Mr. Scholefield, Mr. W. Brown, or Mr. Wrightson, on the Ministerial side; and among the Opposition (for in the conduct of the business of the House no one has any politics), Mr. Wilson Patten, Mr. Sotheron, Mr. Bramston, Sir J. Yarde Buller, and Sir John Trollope; but, when party contests and debates are sweltered out in the middle of July, and a long array of bills, to which nobody has attended, are being passed rapidly through all their stages, the qualities of this sort of men come into play, and mistakes and errors are avoided by their diligence and knowledge of the business of the House.

All this class of members are the staff of the Permanent Chairman of Committee, an office now filled by Mr. E. P. Bouverie, who represents Kilmarnock. The attainment of the office by that gentleman was a curious specimen of luck. The mode in which the appointment is made is, when, in a new Parliament, the House goes for the first time into Committee of Ways and Means, for the leader of the Ministry to move that "Mr. So-and-So do take the chair;" and if agreed to—which it usually has been of late—he retains it permanently during the continuance of that Parliament. Mr. Ralph Bernal held the office during Lord Melbourne's Government; was succeeded, when Sir Robert Peel came into power, in 1841, by Mr. Greene, the Member for Lancaster; but resumed it after the general election in 1847, Lord John Russell's Ministry being in office. It so chanced that, at the general election in 1852, both Mr. Greene and Mr. Bernal lost their seats; and Mr. Wilson Patten, a gentleman who had long devoted himself with great energy and ability to private business, was nominated by Mr. Disraeli, then Ministerial leader, in November, 1852. Early in the spring of 1853, Mr. Wilson Patten's health having failed him, he resigned; and Mr. Bouverie, who had been for some time an active member of the staff for private business above alluded to, was appointed

Just ten days afterwards Mr. Greene (a Ministerialist) was re-elected for Lancaster, his opponent at the general election having been unseated on petition. If he had been in the House at the time of the vacancy he would certainly have been appointed, for if everybody admits that Mr. Berns was the best possible Chairman of Committees, everybody also admits that Mr. Green was quite as good as he. The office is the worst paid in the House, relatively speaking, for the work is tremendous and never ceasing, while the salary is only £1500 a year; less than the Serjeant-at-Arms gets for wearing a Court dress and sword, carrying the mace occasionally, and lounging in the only comfortable chair in the House during its sittings; and, besides, more than one-half of these onerous duties are performed by a Deputy-Serjeant at £800 a year.

However absolute may be the fact of the Ministerial majority when a great Liberal question comes to a division, to the eye of the stranger the Opposition seem quite as numerous, and quite as closely packed when the House is full. The truth is that both sides of the apartment are exactly alike, and as it only contains accommodation for some 450 or 460 members, those of the remaining 654 who chance to be within the walls, must be floating about in lobbies, libraries, refreshment-rooms, &c., carefully looked after by the inexorable functionary who is responsible for majorities. In the mass, then, the Opposition looks formidable, and equal to its duties as a Parliamentary institution; how it may be, if examined in detail, is, of course, a matter of opinion.

On the first row next the table, about midway, and near to one of the two green velvet covered, brass-ornamented boxes, which flank a small collection of well-bound books, in front of which the mace repose, sits the ex-leader of the House, and ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Disraeli. Familiar as his appearance has been made by the pictorial squibs of the day, scant justice has been done to him even in caricatures. He has nothing of the hollow-eyed, round-backed, Jew-boy look which has been so liberally bestowed on him. If it be true that his countenance does not come up to the English standard of manly beauty, and if it is strongly indicative of race, and that neither Norman nor Saxon, yet an impartial and candid observer would admit that it has a character striking and even distinguished. He is neither tall nor is he short; he is rather thin; his forehead is high, round, and smooth; he has black eye-brows, clear dark brown eyes, high cheek-bones, lips firmly set, a pointed chin; and black hair, curling like tendrils all over his compact head, of which one curl is intended to drop carelessly over the brow, but somehow seems to have been got into its place with pains. So of his dress it may be said that it is elaborated into carelessness; but the art is not sufficiently artfully concealed. Its details, its minutiae, are studiously correct. He sits sunk into his seat, his head, always uncovered, reclining forward, so that his eyes appear to be fixed on the ground, or staring at vacancy (which they by no means are), and his whole attitude that of the most rigid repose, till what he conceives the right moment for being aroused arrives, and the listlessness—which, added to the paleness of his complexion, would seem significant of fragility of body or ill-health—is cast off for animation and vigour equal to a sustained speech of five hours and a half.

On each side of him are ranged the members of Lord Derby's Government. There is Sir John Pakington, the most neatly-dressed man—not only in the House, which would perhaps need but small effort, but in the country—who was a very fair "private business member," up to the moment when he was called to hold the seals of the Colonial-office, and of whom it is reported that the late Duke of Wellington, when he was told of his appointment, bluntly said, "Why I never heard of him." He was not the worst of Colonial Secretaries notwithstanding. There is Mr. Walpole, ex-Minister for the Home Department, who has about him a haunting resemblance to the late Sir Robert Peel—the voice, the manner, the face, and, above all, the sleeves of the coat, are dimly like: he is, in short, a kind of very much diluted Sir Robert. Lord Stanley, heir to the Earl of Derby, and the image in face, voice, and style of speaking, though without the physical vigour, of his sire—a philosophic and inquiring young statesman, who will find his place some day. Lord John Manners—a very emphatic young nobleman, who was always going to do something, but has never done it; not even succeeding in getting up a mediæval May-pole in Kensington-gardens, when he was Commissioner of Woods and Forests. Mr. Henley, whose practical sense and business habits pointed him out as one of the best working selections of Lord Derby; but who failed to fulfil expectation when President of the Board of Trade. Mr. Stanford, the late Secretary to the Admiralty—handsome, nonchalant, and fluent. Lord Naas, ex-Secretary for Ireland—a fair, stout, good-humoured, well-looking young man, who has had good opportunities for his time of life. Major Heresford, whose great services as "whipper-in" of the party when out of office were rewarded with the place of Secretary-at-War, when in; and his delegates—Mr. Forbes Mackenzie (he was unseated for Liverpool on petition); Colored Forrester, one of the handsomest of a very handsome race; and Captain Bateson, quite a beauty-man, two or three years ago, but on whose looks the House, politics, and fashionable life are beginning to tell. Sir F. Thesiger, the ex-Attorney-General, who was at one time talked of as proximate Speaker; and Sir Fitzroy Kelly, ex-Solicitor-General, who was the fiercest of Protectionist talkers on the hustings, and a vigorous, if not very successful, opponent of Mr. Gladstone's financial measures last year. The complement of the first bench is completed by Mr. H. J. Baillie—a grave man, and, it is said, a sound adviser of Lord Derby, who had great confidence in him; and Mr. Cumming Bruce, who is one of the comparatively few Scotch members who are not on the Liberal side.

Behind this rank are ranged Mr. Newdegate and Mr. Spooner, colleagues in the representation of Warwickshire, allies in their unyielding opposition to Roman Catholicism in every shape, and stanch believers in Protection, though they have closed their ostensible connection with any movement in its favour; the Marquis of Granby, a sincere and earnest politician, and whom the House, by their unanimous cheers, once declared to be "a man of the strictest honour;" Mr. Malins, an eminent Chancery barrister, but rather too loquacious for a new member; Mr. Edward Ball, the real farmer's friend, which character the tenant-farmers of Cheshire have endorsed by returning him for their county, and giving him, besides, the necessary qualification; Lord Henry Lennox, who was cheered one evening when he, the son of a Duke, brought Mr. Disraeli an orange while he was speaking; Mr. Isaac Butt, whose claims to be in the front rank of Protectionists are as undeniable as those of Messrs. Napier and Whiteside, who, it should be said, are usually near neighbours of Mr. Disraeli. Here, too, may be found Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, who left Parliament a Whig, and something more than ten or twelve years ago, and returned at the last election a Derbyite and Protectionist, and a prominent one too; and Mr. James McGregor, a railway magnate, and who deserves to be one.

Here and hereabouts congregate the broad-crested squires—Sir John Tyrrell, Mr. Christopher, Sir John Yarde Buller, Mr. Cayley, and Mr. Robert Palmer, the Tollemaches, the Egertons, Mr. William Miles, Mr. Deedes, Sir John Trollope, Mr. Henry Seymour, Mr. George Bankes—whose Parliamentary vocations are well nigh gone since Protection has ceased to be the gathering cry of their party. Here, too, are to be found the young scions of nobility who make the House their resting-place, while waiting their flight into the Lords, or their stepping-stone to office and promotion. Here is to be found the Marquis of Chandos, who has proved, by his actions, that he is an honest man, as well as a man of business, and has rightly interpreted the proud motto, "*noblesse oblige*." Here is the Marquis of Blandford, a zealous Church reformer; here are the Bentincks, and the Cecils, the Beau-champs, the Hamiltons, the Lascelles, the Lennoxes, the Liddells, the Percies, the Lowthers, the Manners, the Vane, and the Somersets, who may be depended on to fill the House with well-dressed men on late nights, when divisions are expected between two and three o'clock.

On the front bench, below the Gangway, may be seen Mr. Addeley, a steady colonial reformer, and advocate of juvenile reformation also; Mr. Thomas Baring, a great name in commercial circles, and who declined to leave the guidance of the financial affairs of the merchant-world, in order to be the arbiter of the monetary destinies of England, as Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Derby. In a well-chosen position, on a bench near to the Gallery, may often be seen, when the House is most crowded, a young man with a singularly-handsome face, almost Italian in its style, with rich dark hair, and superb moustache and Vandyke beard; dressed in the extreme easiness of the present fashion, leaning one hand on an enormous stick, while the other is in his pocket; and delivering himself of a series of most singular phrases and words, which, though they sound odd, yet have a glimmering of purpose in them; but, taken altogether, are the very personification of the "free and easy" style of oratory. This is Sir Robert Peel, an eccentricity in politics, as he is in appearance, and who appears satisfied with himself so long as he makes a sensation, in which he is generally successful.

From an exalted station, far back under the Gallery, the renowned Colonel Silthrop still delivers himself of those jerked sentences of denunciation of all political and governmental honesty, and earnest desire for economy and saving the people's money, which, strange and absurd as they sound, are very rarely without a vein of practical sense running through them.

On the second bench below the Gangway are ranged the Irish Brigade. At their head sits Mr. Duffy, whose likeness to Mr. Disraeli is very remarkable; and who would disappoint those who expected something blatant in the editor of the *Nation* newspaper; for he is a remarkably mild-mannered, quiet-talking man, whatever strong things he may say, and has, besides, proved himself a capital Parliamentary tactician. There is Mr. G. H. Moore, a fine and eloquent speaker, but who will not condescend to talk in the House of Commons way, and they will listen to no other style. The *Tablet* newspaper is a loud-sounding print, and force of language is carried in it to a pretty considerable extent; but Mr. Lucas, who is responsible for it all, and the author of a great deal of it, is also a quiet sort of man: he will get earnest, and he will state his opinions, and roundly, too, but he is never coarse, and, being a man of sense, he studies his audience, because he wants to make way with them. There is Mr. Sejeant Shee, with his marked features, and bright silver hair, though he is in the prime of life; a man with much rough and honest power about him. There is delicate and learned Mr. Bowyer, who ought to have lived in the times when lawyers were also ecclesiastics; Mr. Maguire, a sturdy journalist, who is making his way in the House; Mr. Swift, ex-Sheriff of London; Mr. McMahon, who has descended from the Reporters' Gallery to take his place on the floor as member for an Irish county; Mr. Ouseley Higgins, Dr. Brady, and the rest of this band of brothers. Among the Irish members who may be called unattached, and who sit in this locality, are Colonel Dunne (a very busy redresser of national grievances), Captain Magan (an ex-Light Dragoon), who was conspicuous last session in one or two amusing personal, but yet parliamentary, differences among the Irish members; and Mr. Conolly. These, with many others—to mention whom would be hardly more than stating a catalogue of names—go to fill, and fill well, the Opposition side of the House.

It is in the face of this audience—keen, watchful, and critical—that her Majesty's Ministers have every day, about five o'clock, to undergo a series of questionings, in the nature of cross-examinations; a kind of parliamentary baiting. Perhaps the question is addressed to Lord John Russell, and requires information on the subject of the war in Burma, or of the intentions of the Cabinet on the Eastern crisis, or some kindred topic, on which the noble Lord has nothing to say—to the House of Commons. Slowly rising, and swaying himself to and fro over the table, his Lordship delivers himself of a few sentences—half of which being lost, from the low muttering tone in which they are spoken, the reporters, who are responsible for the accuracy of important Ministerial dicta, are driven into temporary frenzy, at the communication that is going on between the leader of the House and the green box on the table. Indeed, since his return to power, Lord John has adopted a tone of reserve towards the Reporters' Gallery, by his inaudible manner of speaking, especially when the subjects of interest. Upon this, up starts Mr. Bright (who seems to have adopted for his parliamentary motto, "*Nihil humanum a me alienum*"), with that air of combative-ness which is set off in such strong relief by the square cut coat of his persuasion, and curtly informs the noble Lord that no one in his neighbourhood can hear a word, and he should be glad to have the answer repeated. Lord John obeys as best he may, and contrives the necessary mystification only by being clumsy.

Next comes a matter which a metropolitan member thinks of vital interest to his constituents. And the Home Office must be oracular in the person of Lord Palmerston. Perhaps, the subject relates to an excess of duty on the part of the police, or an addition of three years to a sentence of transportation on a prisoner, in consequence of disconcerting language to one of the force; and the metropolitan member is as indignant and disturbed as if the question of the oppression of Poland itself were involved. No description can give an idea of the style, tone, and manner in which the noble Secretary acquits himself, when convincing the House that he is always equal to the situation. Those who saw him unexpectedly rise and deliver himself of his amendment on Lord John Russell's Militia Bill, which put that Ministry out of office; or his celebrated resolution in the Free-trade debate, in November, 1852, which saved for a short time the Government of Lord Derby, can understand the extraordinary influence which he exercises over the House. But his happiest moments are, when he has to answer some such question as has been indicated. The springy youthfulness of demeanour with which he rises, takes off his hat, and advances to the table, are unapproachable. Then, while all over his countenance there is an expression of deference for the House, it also asks as plainly as features can speak "Is it possible there can be anything wrong in my department?" This is succeeded by an air of good-natured sympathy, with the amiable weakness of his noble or honourable friend in bringing forward such a trifling matter. The first sentence, however, sounds like a solemn condemnation of an atrocity; but in a minute after everybody is laughing, they don't know why, at the absurdity of the whole affair, and wondering at the simple enthusiasm of the interrogator; and the answer winds up with an implied assurance that if there is in the whole Government a department, the duties of which are rigorously and watchfully performed, it is the Home Office; and so the House is amused, and therefore satisfied—excepting, perhaps, one or two sceptical northern members, who, being practical, ignore fun, and the discomfited metropolitan member who has taken nothing by his motion but the consciousness of his having been the innocent cause of a hearty laugh.

If the interpellation is addressed to Mr. Gladstone, on some point on which information is required from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he replies with the same "copious rotundity" and earnestness of delivery, as if he were engaged in the introduction of a Budget; and though, at first, what he is saying may sound involved, and not very intelligible, you can see that it is quite clear to the financial men of business in the House; even although Mr. Disraeli, in his capacity of ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, seldom comprehends what Mr. Gladstone is about till he has a day to reflect, and perhaps a confidential communication from somebody or the other.

Sir Charles Wood—who has all his life been financial, if anything, "but that's not much"—may be called on, as President of the Board of Control to explain some point of Indian policy; and, having inquired of Mr. Lowe, he replies, in a jaunty, off-hand, what-business-is-it-of-yours way, not much to the purpose, but with an assurance that it is all right.

The administration of the Admiralty may require elucidation from Sir James Graham, who—slow and solemn, with a gentle, half-lispings voice, sounding strange as coming from a man of his large proportions—intimates that he is going to be very truthful and candid; and then gives a clear and satisfactory statement, which shows that he is well acquainted with the minutiae of his department, and works hard for its efficiency.

If Sir William Molesworth is applied to on the subject of Metropolitan Bridges, the New Palace at Westminster, or the want of strolling in seats in the Parks—not being very sleepy as yet—his reply is ready and plausible—showing that he is quite prepared to be busy, but that his office really gives him little power to do anything he likes; but, where he has the power, he does not want the will—as, for instance, in the case of opening Kew Gardens on Sundays.

Sir John Pakington is, perhaps, desirous of knowing whether anything has been doing in the Colonial Office since he left it so neat and trim—as far as the carpets, tables, and chairs were concerned; and he gets his answer from Mr. Frederick Peel, who proves, by his chapter-and-verse readiness, that Providence and his red-tap education have cut him out for a perpetual Under-Secretary.

The expenses of some camp, or the unnecessary movement of a regiment, calls up Mr. Sidney Herbert, who is very volatile and fine-gentlemanlike, and he glibly indicates that it will be all in the Army Estimates; which means that the House will then be in committee, and nothing reported with any specialty, which will cause the matter to pass over more pleasantly.

An Irish member may press Sir John Young hard on some of his country's rights or wrongs, and though the Secretary for Ireland evidently knows all about it, he does not get his meaning out very clearly, for which the Irish member is not sorry, as it will give him another opportunity of coming forward patriotically.

And in such manner does the proceeding go on, on most evenings;

the questions being carefully made as pungent and pertinent as possible,

and the answers so shaped as at once to satisfy the House and not commit the Government.

The formal business fixed then comes on, being the first "order of the day," or the "first motion," as the case may be. On nights of a great Ministerial statement, as a Budget or an India Bill, the House will continue full till its close; and on three occasions within the last eighteen months it has listened to a single speaker for five hours and more. On these occasions the questions before the House, are, in the case of financial measures, motions for resolutions; and, in other cases, for leave to bring in Bills. There is rarely, if ever, any regular or systematic debating then—only desultory talk; and the bills are usually allowed to be brought in and read a first time. They then stand in the orders for second readings, and the official who has the charge of them simply moves "that they be read a second time," upon which a mem-

ber selected from its opponents, rises to move an amendment, which would have the effect of throwing it out; and with his speech the debate commences. On the first night the interest is sustained, because a good man is always put up to open the opposition, who must be replied to by an experienced hand on the other side, who must have his answer, and the game is well played until about half-past twelve, when the adjournment of the debate is moved, most probably by a sound but not brilliant debater, who resumes it as of right on the next evening, about half-past five.

Then comes the era of what are called in newspaper parlance, "little men," who talk during the period from six to ten, when dinner thins the House down to the mystical "forty." At ten a more or less celebrity springs up, and the intellectual contest again becomes animated—the excitement of rival parties is stimulated to the top of its bent, and lives itself vent in that vociferous demonstration of approval which is designated by the word "cheers." This is peculiar to the House of Commons. It is not a "hurrah" or a "bravo," or any kind of exclamation, or a clapping of hands, or a stamping on the floor—all of which may be heard in other assemblies—but is a rapid shouting at the top of the voice, of the words, "Hear! hear!" repeated again and again, until the excitement subsides. It usually bursts out with a simultaneous as which, considering the class of men, and their peculiarities, of which the House is composed, is, at times very extraordinary—at least, when it is elicited by remark in the course of a speech, for the observation obviously does not apply to the close of a successful address, when applause, in the nature of thuds, is spontaneous. When the cheering is prolonged, it is curious how much in unison it is; and, altogether, no one who has heard a full-mouthed House of Commons cheer, would ever mistake anything else for it. The debates conducted on this system usually extend over the four sitting nights of the week—Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Sometimes, but very rarely, they go into the next week. The ordinary course, however, is for the leader of the Opposition to rise about ten or eleven on the Friday, and close the case on that side, while the Minister leader, or the member of the Government who has charge of the bill, replies to him, and sums up the debate. At an early hour of Saturday morning, the impatient and expectant House, by a general understanding, comes to a division.

It is on occasions like these that all the characteristics of the House of Commons come out. Now is to be seen the phenomenon of the rapid emptying of the House, when a "nobody," or still more, when a "bore" rises; and the as rapid filling when one of its real speakers gets on his legs. It is peculiar that House of Commons way of talk; nothing of the debating society style, which existed even as late as the time of Canning, will be tolerated there. Mr. Disraeli tried it when he first got there, and failed; and that to such a degree, that it was a wonder he ever opened his mouth again. But, having promised that "some day they should hear him," he set about acquiring the knack, and has it in perfection now. Even when making a great speech his tone is friendly and familiar, much as if he were holding an impressive conversation with Lord John Russell just opposite to him; and this tone hardly varies when he utters the bitterest sarcasm, except, perhaps, that he is slower and more careless in manner, the words just dropping from his lips. When he comes to the peroration he gets more serious and solemn; the march of his sentences is grander, a little eloquence is ventured on, and there is a little raising of the voice, and more vehemence of gesture; but to the last he is unexcited, and the great care is to be unpretending, that he may always get cheered at the right place; and his speeches are always hits.

Lord Palmerston has the reputation of having made one of the greatest speeches ever delivered in Parliament (that on the Greek question in 1850); he had a whole night to himself; and, as was said by one who followed him, from "the close of one day to the dawn of the next the House hung upon his lips." He is one of the best speech-makers we have. But no one speaks plainer English, or uses plainer words. Terse, pointed, epigrammatic, full of knowledge of his subject, accompanied by a something in the manner which acts like a charm, and yet is not what would be called charming, his addresses never fail to interest and to sway the House; but as to eloquence, as people usually interpret the word, he has not a particle of it.

Lord John Russell labours under positive defects of utterance; he pauses between every word to say "ah!" and he flattens every letter into the most unnecessary breadth; and as to his language, it is usually plain-talking enough, while his manner is cold in the extreme; and yet no man has made more successful speeches in Parliament than he has. He certainly has, on occasions which demand an ascension above the dead routine, risen into something very nearly eloquence, and uttered fine passages; but even then the melancholy coldness and flatness of his manner has scarcely altered; while no visible excitement has quickened the slowness of his delivery.

Mr. Gladstone has as great a command of words as any man in or out of the House, and he delivers himself with astounding rapidity of wonderful sentences, which, sounding involved, almost verbose, are yet skilfully brought up to their climax; and they are so complete as to be capable of being transferred at once from shorthand into print, without an alteration. His five hours and a half speech on introducing his Budget last year was, considering its straightforward, never pausing, right-a-head rapidity, the best-sustained effort of the kind on record. He has, however, been too long in the House not to know that it won't listen to words alone; but demands language that indicates things. In short, the House of Commons is a moral despotism which will have its own way of talk, its own way of doing business, and its own standard of everything—which innovators and independent Members strive against in vain.

The speaking in Parliament is not so much discussion, which the word "debate" implies, as a series of members delivering their sentiments, or offering advice. There is little hope or expectation of influencing results; and, what every one most wishes is, to set himself individually right with his constituents. It rarely happens that the very numbers, on a division on an important question, are not known to within two or three. That test, however, is, nevertheless, still as formally and carefully applied at the end of every debate. The speaking, by universal consent, ceases, and the word "divide" is echoed on all sides. The Speaker cries out in his loudest tones, "Strangers must withdraw." This order, until within a short period of the close of last Session, used to be literally complied with, every one but members and officers of the House being turned out. This occupied some time, and much noise and confusion was caused by the return of the strangers to their places after the division was over. The system was reconsidered, and now no one is actually required to withdraw except the occupants of the Peers' seats behind the bar, and the diplomatic gallery over it, which are considered as in the body of the House, and might lead to their mingling with members.

As soon as the order to withdraw is given, a two-minute sand-glass is turned by one of the Clerks, in order to give time to members in the Library, and other parts of the building, to come in. They are summoned by the simultaneous ringing of sharp and peculiar-sounding bells in every room, which is effected by means of electricity. Those who are absent hurry in, and the sand having run out, the outer doors are instantly closed, ingress or egress being no longer allowable. The Speaker gives the direction, "The Ayes to the right, the Noes to the left," and the former file out by the door at the back of the chair; the latter pass up the Gangway on the Opposition side, and out at small door at the end of the House, on the left side, under the Gallery. The Speaker then orders two "Tellers" to each door; one of them reports to him that "the House is clear." The Members then file in—the Ayes entering at the principal door at the bar, the Noes by the left-hand door behind the chair. Each member passes between the two Tellers, who count them as they pass; while a clerk, with a list of names in his hand, ticks off that of each man, in order to the immediate preparation of the "Division Lists," which appear every morning, printed with the "Votes." When all have re-entered the House, and assumed their places, the Tellers compare notes, and having made up the numbers correctly, all four of them place themselves about the middle of the floor, and advance together, bowing three times, as usual, to the table. The principal Teller then, in a loud voice, declares "the Ayes to the right" to be so many, the "Noes to the left" so many; which formula is immediately repeated by the Speaker, and the fate of the question, for that time, is decided. When the numbers are declared, both parties cheer vigorously for those on their own side—the winners, for the victory; and the losers, for having shewn a good fight. This machinery by which the votes of individual members are collected, arranged, and made known, may sound cumbersome when it is described, and it may occur to many that a simpler process might be adopted with advantage; but, practically, it is the quickest and most accurate mode of registering votes, and assigning each member his place in the list, for the actual operation from the moment when the clearing of the House begins, to the return of every one, and the declaration by the "Tellers," even when the House is at the fullest, does not take more than five or six minutes, and as six persons are employed in counting and checking names, mistakes can hardly occur; while the only trouble it gives to members, is a walk out of one door, through a short lobby, and in at another, which is not an excessive labour. The only mistakes



RECEPTION OF THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR, ON TUESDAY LAST.

that usually occur, are in the cases of members getting into the wrong lobbies, and voting exactly contrary to their intentions; but that is their own faults, they alone are responsible, and must clear themselves in the best way they can, by means of the newspapers.

With the question of voting, the whole system of party management is inseparably connected. It is not the personal influence of Ministers, or chiefs of Opposition, the political weight of Cabinets, or the convictions brought to men's minds by great argumentative speeches, that bring members up in a body at the right moment, to give their votes on their own right sides. If the arrangement were to be left, to be regulated by such chances, no one could ever reckon on any measure being carried in a single session. Now by a great moral law of the House of Commons, which pervades and acts upon its whole system, like

the atmosphere on the human frame, not the less powerfully because it is impalpable, every man must more or less yield up his individuality; no one can be in its integrity that which is called "an independent member." On fitting occasions a man may, if he sees fit, show that he is no blind or bigoted follower of any set of ruling men, but can think for himself; although the rarer he makes those occasions, the greater will he find his sphere of real usefulness to be. But do what he may, the times will and must come when he will be called on to perform the act of voting, when he will be called on to say "aye" or "no" on certain questions; and from this position he cannot escape, and it will only remain for him to decide which is the most in accordance with his principles.

He will thus be insensibly brought under the influence, and, to a

certain extent, under the control, of a functionary of his party, called the "Whipper-in." This is a gentleman of great Parliamentary experience, no little knowledge of mankind—political mankind especially; perfectly acquainted with all the resources of his party, the machinery of which he works pretty much himself as Director-General; and who usually has attached to him, as assistants, two members younger than himself, who are better able to touch the sympathies, and accommodate themselves to the humours and tastes of men of their own age: the seniors he keeps to himself. It is his and their business to have themselves informed of the whereabouts of every available man of their party who may be required on a division on any night; and as regards the Government party, to see that enough for a working majority are always actually on the



REFRESHMENT-ROOM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

STATUES IN ST. STEPHEN'S HALL, AND THE CENTRAL HALL.



MATILDA, STEPHEN'S QUEEN.



HENRY II.



ELEANOR, QUEEN OF HENRY II.



KING JOHN.



ISABELLA, QUEEN OF JOHN.



BERENGARIA, QUEEN OF RICH. I.



HENRY III.



ELEANOR, WIFE OF HENRY III.



EDWARD I.



ISABELLA, QUEEN OF EDWARD II.



EDWARD III.



ANNE, QUEEN OF RICHARD II.



HENRY IV.



HENRY V.



EDWARD IV.



PHILIPPA, QUEEN OF EDWARD IV.



RICHARD III.



ANNE, QUEEN OF RICHARD III.



HENRY VII.



ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF HENRY VII.



EDWARD VI.



ANNE BOLEYN.



QUEEN MARY, OF SCOTLAND.



CHARLES I.

premises, and within hearing of the division-bell, so as to reach the House before the two-minute sand-glass has run out. On nights when a great party debate is expected to terminate (of which every member of the party is informed by circular), of course the interest is strong enough to bring down a full House without much exertion. But, even then, great vigilance and watchfulness is required on the part of "Whippers-in" to keep all the men together till the end, as each party likes to turn out as strong as possible in the division-list, no matter what the result; and some men will get tired and want to go away, and others are comfortable elsewhere, and don't want to come; and for the management of such subjects much address and skill is requisite. A great deal might be said about the science of "whipping in," to show the adroit and practised sort of intellect and *physique* it requires in its professors. It may suffice, however, here to add that that functionary on the Government side is generally one of the Secretaries to the Treasury, and that the office is admirably well filled at present by Mr. Hayter; and that on the Opposition side the task of overlooking and bringing up is more onerous, as the number of young, aristocratic, and fashionable members is much greater, and it is absolutely necessary for the "Whippers-in" to be acquainted with every man's habits, tastes, and haunts, so that he may be able to fix on the exact dinner-table or ballroom, stall at the opera, or corner of a club-room, where he may be found at a particular hour of the night.

In thin Houses, voting becomes anomalous to absurdity. It may be that a motion is being made, or a clause in a bill, or an item in the Estimates being discussed in Committee, as is often the case, with scarcely forty members present: division is suddenly called; the bell rings, and in rush members in twenties and fifties: they belong to both sides; don't know what has been under discussion—what the question is they are to assist in deciding—except from what they can learn in the sharp two-minutes' run from some friend or official; but, if they fail in that, they will be sure to find the faithful and vigilant "Whipper-in" pointing to the Lobby where they are to go; and there, as they are having their names marked, they may absolutely learn "what is the question!" They vote by an instinct which never errs; and all is right. This subject was very usefully brought before the House by an Irish member last session, on some Tenant-right amendment in a bill which the thinness of the House all the evening had given its supporters some hopes of carrying; and which hopes were destroyed by the unexpected apparition of sixty or seventy Government voters in less than two minutes. On that occasion, Lord John Russell gravely justified the custom, and stated that it was founded on the exigencies of our parliamentary system, which necessitated a great deal of voting which rested solely on confidence in party. As Englishmen are very practical, and wish good measures to be passed as fast as possible—after that explanation, it is to be presumed that there is nothing more to be said in the matter.

It is from February until after Whitsuntide that the show Parliamentary season is in full vigour. It is during that period that the important Ministerial measures have been got through their second readings—that the great party moves of the Opposition have been made—that the clash of hostile debates has rung far into the hours after midnight. But July comes, and Parliament is getting tired of its odd habit of reversing the usual order of human tastes, which induces men to seek the country during the heats of summer, and to congregate in cities during winter; and a sensible alarm begins to be felt lest the shooting season should commence before the prorogation. Therefore, the process of weeding the long list of measures which still present a prospect of six months' work, is duly entered upon. This is called, in the jocular parlance of the House, "the massacre of the innocents." Day after day some Minister signifies that such a measure will not be proceeded with this session. The Speaker gets some rest, for the House is every day in committee, when the Chairman of Committees presides, sitting in the chair at the right side of the table.

It is when the House is thus constituted that the clauses of bills are considered. The Speaker retires, the mace is removed from its place on, and placed under, the table; and the Chairman reads each clause of the bill, which is then considered, debated, and, perhaps, divided upon; amendments are made, or not, as the case may be; and all this is done by a very few working members, for even "the forty" are not always present. A member can speak any number of times in Committee, whereas, he is limited to one address when a matter is before the House. A good deal of tedious talking is carried on, but it is all conversational; nothing is full-dress; and it does not expect—what it would not get—any reporting. When the Chairman leaves the chair, it is on the motion "that he report progress;" the Speaker comes in and takes the chair, the mace reappears on the table, and the Chairman states what has been done. If the clauses are not all gone through, he "asks leave to sit again;" but, if the bill is finished, it is reported, and then is ready for the third reading. It is only in the case of the most important and strongly-opposed measures that much debating takes place on a third reading. The process of exhaustion has been pretty well gone through when it comes to that stage; and the official and party strength which has borne it up to this point is usually sufficient, and more than sufficient, to tide it safely over the last shoal it has to encounter. Its opponents are generally content with short protests against its principle, and the fine voice of the Speaker has a mellow pleasantness when he puts the question, "that this bill be read a third time;" and in the refrain, "the Ayes have it." With even a little more unctuousness does the right honourable gentleman deliver himself of the important words, "that this bill do pass;" which places it beyond the criticism or control of the Commons House of Parliament.

It sometimes happens, however, that divisions are taken on the third reading, and even on the question "that the bill do pass;" but they are rare attempts, and very little is ever gained by them. Clauses are often added, and amendments made, on the third reading; but they are mostly such as have been previously agreed upon, and do not excite much discussion.

Very important functions are exercised by Committees of the whole House. All questions of taxation and finance—such as the Income-tax and Succession-duties—are disposed of by a Committee of Ways and Means; while the voting away of money for expenditure is conducted by a Committee of Supply. It is in this latter that the Army, Navy, and Miscellaneous Estimates are discussed and voted. Although the number of members attending these latter committees is generally small, the most vigilant, practical, and sensible men in the House are regularly in their places. Every item of money to be voted is printed in papers which are in the hands of members; and every vote is put separately by the Chairman. The most minute discussion is thus effectually obtained; objections are taken, and votes defended and explained; suggestions for the future are made, modes of reducing expenditure pointed out, and promises of economy and diminution of expense made. The aspect of things on these occasions is much more satisfactory to those who don't think much of your great Parliamentary displays, in which all the talk leads to nothing, and influences no result. In Committee of Supply no one thinks of making speeches, or glorifying himself; but sound practical sense and desire for saving the public money, combined with good humour, and a great deal of conversation on all sides, may be said to characterise the proceedings.

It is not meant to be said that every Committee of Supply produces large savings to the country; but in these days there always appears each year a diminution in many items as compared with the preceding year; and if the amounts be small in themselves, yet the tendency is to lop off all that is useless and unnecessary, and to see that for every sum that is spent something worth having is got. It is on these occasions that Mr. Hume, the Nestor of administrative reform, seconded by his imitator and follower, Mr. W. Williams, is in full force. Here, too, may be found, loudly remonstrant, the vigilant guardian of the people's purse, Colonel Sibthorp, who will go down to posterity as having beaten the Government on the question of the allowance to the Prince Consort, and who was thus the means of an annual saving of £20,000 a year. On these occasions the naval and military men, the scientific men, the engineers, &c., are to be found bringing their experiences to light, and some of them airing their crotchetts to their heart's content; and if, probably, some precious time is lost, upon the whole, good is done; and the hearty cheer with which the passing of the last item of the Estimates is always greeted, is the ebullition of feeling of a small body of sensible English gentlemen, who have the consciousness that they have been doing their duty.

It is in July that the Government seizes on the Thursdays for their business; and "orders of the day" have precedence then as well as on Mondays and Fridays. The bills introduced by private members, and to which the Wednesday sittings from twelve at noon till six in the evening are devoted, begin to find their inevitable fate; that is, having advanced to a certain stage, say half-way through Committee, they begin to slip through the fingers of the gentlemen who have them in charge in a most unaccountable way, till suddenly they are one day found to be in so queer a position that the bland suggestion of some Minister (who assures the honourable gentleman that the Government will consider the principle of the

measure), to withdraw the bill for the present, is eagerly acceded to, and the half-shapen piece of legislation is consigned to the "limbo of next session." A bill brought in by a private member must have some wonderful inherent strength to get passed through the House. Such was the case of the bill for extending the jurisdiction of the County Courts to £250, brought in by Mr. Fitzroy, then out of office; and in which he beat the Ministry in their decided opposition to it, led on by the Attorney-General of the day. But the fact is, that the whole legislation of the country is passing into the hands of the Government for the time being—a principle which is looked upon with much jealousy and distaste by many members.

From the middle of July the Government has the business of the House pretty much in its own hands. Then commence Morning Sittings, when the House meets at twelve at noon, and adjourns at four till six o'clock. This has of late years been found indispensable to getting through the work on hand. Notwithstanding this, the sittings are often protracted till three, half-past three, and even four o'clock the next morning, when the wearied and sickened legislators wend their ways home to get such sleep as will enable them to come again at twelve o'clock, into the dreary-looking and stuffy chamber, which they have left so few hours before, that the heated atmosphere has scarcely had time to evaporate. At the morning sittings, the very inanimate things in the House—the table and the cushions—look jaded and worn; and the mace is dim, as if time had not been allowed for polishing it up.

The Tuesday evenings are, however, still left to private members; and plenty of motions remain which would have excited interest four months before, but now are contemplated with indifference, if not horror. The possibility of a "no House" is precluded by the fact that the Government has the morning sitting, which is all they want; and the House—adjourning at four, and resuming at six—is constituted, without the necessity of ascertaining the number of members present. There, however, is vested in every Member a power, which, occasionally exercised even early in the session, is now to be expected to be prevalent on Tuesday evenings; and its result is what is called "count out." If it is found that forty members are not present at any time, a motion may be made that "the House be counted;" strangers are ordered to withdraw; and if the Speaker finds less than forty in the House, an adjournment is the immediate and necessary consequence. If it is wanted to keep a House, a sufficient number of men are easily caught and brought in before the counting begins; but, as in most cases, the affair is understood, and has even been the subject of pre-arrangement, the motion is usually effectual.

The signs of a "count out" are unmistakable. The thinness of the benches is palpable; the voice of the member addressing the House, who sees his fate, sounds hollow and hesitating; gradually members listlessly rise from their seats, and lounging towards the Bar and under the Galleries, slink quietly out. The intended mover counts carefully; there are thirty-six present; it would be dangerous to move yet, as three men might come in accidentally before the doors were closed. Five minutes more there are thirty-two—nearer, but not near enough; one more count—twenty-seven—a voice is heard muttering something, which causes the member who is speaking to stop suddenly and drop in his seat as if he was shot. Strangers withdraw; the gentlemen of the press grinning delightedly; three minutes more—it's all right, "counted out"—holiday for this evening. This privilege of "counting out" is often the instrument by which Parliamentary "bores" are punished, and is often applied with ruthless severity to the reformation of that unfortunate class. At any rate it is an institution, and a privilege, which is rigidly guarded by members; and complaints to the House and writing to newspapers have little or no influence upon it.

At this period of the Session, the House of Lords is vigorously exercising its function as a registry for the bills passed by the Commons, and the business is often interrupted for a few minutes by "a message from the Lords." At some convenient moment the Speaker, who has espied a well-wigged Master in Chancery, the Lords' Messenger, sitting under the Gallery, calls out "Mr. Serjeant," upon which that functionary comes to the table and states that there is a message from the Lords to be delivered; he seizes the mace, returns to the Bar, places himself by the side of the Messenger of the Peers, and they advance, bowing the conventional number of times; the bills and papers are given in, and the Serjeant and his prisoner (for he looks like it) retire backwards.

The Lords will, however, sometimes disagree with the Commons on points of detail in bills; and, if their amendments are not agreed to by the Commons when the bills are sent back, a Conference is desired, and a certain number of members having been appointed to manage it on the part of the Lower House, they are called by name at the table, and leave the House for the apartment assigned to such meetings. During their absence, all other business is suspended.

About this period, the summonses to hear the Royal Assent given by Commission to bills in the House of Lords are frequent. The Speaker, accompanied by the Serjeant-at-Arms and other officers, when summoned by "Black Rod," marches stately down the House, along the ranged ranks of standing and uncovered members; who, on his departure, throw themselves in the most free-and-easy groups and attitudes possible; walk about with their hats on (the custom being for no one ever to rise from his seat without uncovering), and talk loud, and laugh, if they have the strength and spirits, till the potential announcement of "Mr. Speaker!" causes them to "fall in," and resume their Parliamentary decorum.

The month of August has commenced: for the last three weeks there has been speculation and guessing as to what day is fixed for the Prorogation, and bets run high on Tuesdays and Thursdays, according to opinion. The list of "orders of the day" shrinks daily, from the appalling number of thirty-six or thirty-seven, first down to reasonable limits, and then gradually diminishes to the vanishing point. On a Saturday, the Speaker gives his annual official dinner to the officers of the House, and the Ministry go down to Greenwich to dine on exaggerated whitebait. These signs are conclusive—it must be the next week. On the Monday and Tuesday the House meets in the morning, and the Secretary to the Treasury states, at three o'clock, that he would move the adjournment then, and not give the House the trouble to meet in the evenings; but the Lords have still some amendments to bills, to be considered in Conferences; and, as that body never alters its customs for any reason whatever, and five o'clock is their hour of meeting, there must be a House for that necessary business. On Tuesday evening the House adjourns over till one o'clock on Thursday. On that day fifty or sixty worn and haggard members assemble, to meet the Speaker, who takes the chair in his state-robe of brocade and gold embroidery. The "paper" of the day, which, for a long time past, has been a volume, is reduced to a single half-sheet, on which two or three melancholy motions, which have been deserted by their owners, appear. The Ministers come in, one after the other, looking lively and hilarious; positively recovering their health from two or three days' cessation from Parliamentary labours: that extent of holiday is always enough to revive a regular official man in high place—a longer one would deprive him of his greatest pleasure. The chiefs of the Opposition have left town a fortnight ago. The names of the members present are placed in a ballot-box. Perhaps some enthusiastic metropolitan member, seeing that there is no business before the House, will take that opportunity of interrogating the Home Secretary on the alleged case of excess of duty in a policeman, which has been disposed of before; but, while the noble Lord is replying, the outer doors of the House are closed, and there is a loud cry of "Black Rod!" succeeded by solemn silence, which is broken by three smart and distinct raps on the panel. The doors fly wide open and disclose the Usher of the Black Rod, in his richly-ornamented Court uniform of blue and gold, standing in a theatrical "pose" at the threshold; behind him the light pouring from the long vista of the Commons' Corridor, the Central Hall, and the Corridor leading into the House of Lords, where even now the Queen is seated on the Throne, awaiting her faithful Commons. "Black Rod" advances to the table, and commands, in imperative language, their immediate attendance. The Speaker draws himself up to his full height, and, assuming his most dignified manner, sweeps through the respectful ranks of the House he represents. The Ministers follow him, three or four abreast. The names of the other members present are drawn as quickly as possible from the ballot-box, and as they are called out each man rushes as hard as he can go after the Speaker, the principle seeming to be that when they go to the Lords as "a House," they should be as tumultuous and noisy as possible. Some twenty minutes elapse, and an almost painful stillness pervades the deserted apartment which for so many months has echoed with bustle; and, with the same ceremony, the Speaker returns, accompanied by some dozen, or it may be two dozen, of members. He stands on the Ministerial side of the table; the few members gather round the end and other side the whole thing looking sad and funereal. Hastily, and in a low voice, he reads the Speech they have just heard delivered, shakes hands with them all, and vanishes into his private room. The lingering few disperse, the House is emptied, the pulsations of the Parliamentary heart cease—the Session is over.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING.

THE meeting of Parliament, at a period as critical and pregnant with great events as any in the history of the world, and having before it internal affairs of the deepest interest to the country ripe for discussion, induces us to offer a brief account of the growth and existing system of Parliamentary Reporting, which has so completely altered the Constitution, and become the public and popular essence of our Representative Government.

In the elder times, the debates of Parliament, though infinitely less importance than they are now, were guarded from intrusion as jealously as the golden apples in the Garden of the Hesperides, and woe betide the Hercules who dared venture to trespass on the sacred enclosure. But, indeed, until two centuries ago, from the age of the Witena-gemots, or Wise National Councils, of our Saxon ancestors, to the Norman Conquest, when Parliaments (from *Parler la ment*, to speak one's mind) were instituted, but communicated nothing of their mind to the commonalty, except in the forms of laws and edicts, and during succeeding centuries, whilst the wars of the rival Roses lasted, to the unhappy era of the Stuarts, the Houses of Lords and Commons were as dumb as the Star Chamber. Even the journals of the latter only commenced in the beginning of the sixteenth, and were printed in the middle of last century, and it was not till a quarter advanced in the seventeenth that the Court and Country parties took their sides, and consequently began to look about for means to acquaint the nation with their views and arguments.

Still at this date very little was suffered to transpire, and that little was made known by letters from members, such as are seen in the Paston Letters, and other remarkable publications, which have since been rescued from muniment chests and collections of family papers. Such information could only be scantily and partially disseminated, and the mass of the people remained altogether ignorant of what so nearly affected their welfare or injury.

By-and-by very brief notices occurred, irregularly, in printed News-Leiters, and a little more was told as to what was done, but nothing of the manner of doing it. The indefinable and indescribable privileges of Parliament were sufficient to stop all pens, and almost all mouths; for it was as dangerous to talk of its acts as it had formerly been to speak of absolute Kings; and gaols and scaffolds loomed at no great distance over any indiscretions.

The next phase—when the dread, if not the stringency, of these privileges had somewhat abated—was the actual newspaper and magazine publication of the debates, or rather of their substance, but neither in the names nor the words of the speakers; though the general reader could readily assign them to the real individuals, thinly cloaked under such Roman names as Scipio, Sempronius, Atticus, or Marius. A hundred years ago, Dr. Johnson, under the fiction of the Debates in the Senate of Lilliput, clothed the tenor of the most striking speeches in his own sonorous style; and thus, between pseudo Romans and quaint Lilliputians, the country began to learn something of the debates in Parliament, and the conduct of its business.

At last, up sprung the father of the present practice of reporting. William Woodfall, the renowned publisher of "Junius's Letters," availing himself of a wonderfully retentive memory, attended nightly in the gallery, and bore away an almost incredible quantity of the debates, which he took time to write out and publish in his paper. He connected the leading speeches, and, we believe, only printed such *in extenso* as he could submit to the parties for their correction; compressing the rest; yet still affording a fair idea of the whole.

When Woodfall (who died in 1803) accomplished this feat, the appearance of a stranger taking a note in the gallery of the House of Commons would, on the instant, have consigned him to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms, imprisoned in the strong-room, an humble and contrite apology at the bar, and the payment of fees by no means light. But the sharp edge of the wedge had been gotten in, and gradual encroachment on one hand, and connivance on the other, confronted the transcendent jurisdiction of Parliament; till, by degrees, that which was winked at became recognised, and the privileges of the "fourth estate" attained a co-equal authority. Facilities succeeded impediments, and conveniences restrictions; and the modern organisation of Parliamentary reporting, and full publication of the debates in the newspapers, is now as perfect a public right and branch of legislation as if the orders to implement these functions were sanctioned by the Queen, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled. We need hardly repeat that this has, to a great extent, altered the working of the British Constitution, and, by that alteration, popularised it to a still greater extent; while it has conferred a vast power upon the periodical press, and spread the elements of desirable and beneficial intelligence throughout the length and breadth of the land. In nothing does the true liberty of the press stand so prominently high, or so greatly serve the best interests of the realm, as in the able performance of this most important duty.

But, to cast a retrospect upon the history of its progress, we must go back to about the date of the death of Woodfall. At the commencement of this century the morning journals had retained, each, a staff of reporters, generally consisting of five or six gentlemen of talent, liberal education, and literary aspirations. The whole corps, we should estimate, did not exceed forty, and after a few sessions' practice in the Gallery, the majority of them were drafted off to pursue their professions (chiefly legal), or try their fortune in public employments to which they had interest enough to be preferred. Ireland and Scotland contributed the larger proportion; and England only lent an occasional leaven to the mass. But they wrought together in great harmony, and in the enforced indulgence of social habits which are no longer unavoidable. For in those days the association was, of necessity, more intimate, in consequence of the circumstances under which their labours were performed. These labours were very onerous. On all great debates, the gallery doors were thrown open at twelve o'clock, high noon, and the body of reporters were obliged to struggle with the crowd and fight their way into their places as best they could; their rivals, who had procured orders for admission, or paid considerable fees for the same, being seldom disposed to give way for the Gentlemen of the Press. The Gallery filled—the back seat taken possession of, without much effort, as the strangers usually rushed to the front—and the doors locked, so that farther entrance was impossible, the reporters had five hours before them for any sort of pastime, till the Speaker took the chair, at four o'clock, and the proceedings began. At all times, this confinement was fatiguing; and, in hot summer weather, exhausting. And, when the spell was broken, there was the arduous occupation of taking notes for at least an hour, if not an hour and a half, of the solid debate (the routine being briefly dismissed); and the well-tired reporter hurried to his office, to write out his matter on slips of paper, which were carried off by the printers or compositors as fast as he could fill them. His successor to the note-book and seat followed in the same manner; and so throughout the night, till all was done; and, about nine or ten o'clock the doors were re-opened, so that fresh assistance could come in.

As in reporting, so in obtaining refreshments, the aspect and customs of the inner accommodations of the Senate were widely different from what they are now. Up-stairs from the Gallery there was a moderate-sized coffee-room, with a clear brisk fire blazing at the nether end, on which a spacious gridiron was placed; and on the gridiron everlasting relays of chops and steaks, which, with veal pies and beetroot pickles, were the only comestibles cooked there for the use of Members. Into

this sanctum no alien was permitted to penetrate, but there was a very small outer landing-place on the top of the staircase, separated from the coffee-room by a slight partition and open door, where a table was hospitably set for the recreation of strangers (principally reporters, who were no strangers) who chose to pay for it; and the finest cold beef in London was abundantly supplied, together with Bellamy's excellent port,* to brace up nature for the approaching toil of listening to and loading memory with the debate. Here a good deal of festivity was always going on—often some rare fun and jokes; and the friendly and social intimacies to which we have alluded were cultivated. We should note historically that there were no male waiters: the attendants were all brightly clean and good-looking handmaidens (and most inveterate flirts in coffee-room, staircases, or anywhere.) At one of the coffee-room tables we have witnessed Lord Wellesley, Sir Arthur (Duke of Wellington), and Mr. Canning, taking their lively chop together; and, at another, perhaps Wyndham, Sheridan, Brougham, and other celebrities of the age. Members would sometimes join the company at the table on the landing-place, where six or eight had room to scramble for their meal; and, latterly, reporters or other visitors were admissible to the coffee-rooms, if introduced by members. And so the etiquette continued till all these things were changed and the establishment broken up.

Close upon the period which we are describing, the band of reporters included several young men, who afterwards raised themselves to high public distinction. Among these, the late James Stephens and Serjeant Spankie, and the present Lord Chief Justice Campbell may be mentioned; and later years have trained a number of hardly less conspicuous characters, through the same instructive discipline of the mental faculties, to deserved consideration in the superior walks of life. And the miscellany also boasted of its variety of wits and humourists, whose whims and vagaries might fill a volume. The story of Mark Supple (a wag of infinite drollery) waking up, and calling upon the Speaker for a song, when the House was drawing through a committee, is well known. The same worthy got an innocent Quaker taken into custody, and hauled out of the Gallery, for an offence he had himself committed. He was the Yorick of the Gallery, and often kept it in a roar. One of his tricks was played off upon a countryman of his own, who, overcome with fatigue, happened to fall asleep at his task of note-taking, at a late hour of the night. On being awoken by a loud "Hear, hear," he discovered that Mr. Wilberforce was speaking, and vehemently applied to Supple to supply the lacuna of his dream-land; on which the remorseless joker pretended to consult his own memoranda, and told his friend that Mr. Wilberforce, in alluding to Ireland, had burst out with a splendid eulogy upon the potato. "Had I," he said (Supple) "been a native of that illustrious country, and fed upon that glorious root, I might, in stature and appearance, have been like the honourable and gallant officer on my right (Gen. Mathews), instead of approaching to the resemblance of the stunted abortion of an angry ape. It was for this noble apostrophe the House cheered him;" and the poor, misdirected Paddy got himself into a sad scrape by carrying this absurd invention home to his journal.

Many typographical errors and other peculiarities which have appeared in the newspaper reports, are amusing and whimsical. On the *Morning Post* were a Dr. Fleming, a fine scholar, and a Mr. Fitzgerald, who went afterwards as Governor to Sierra Leone, and died there. When a reporter finished his manuscript he notes upon it who is his successor, so that the printer may join the copy together correctly; and, in this instance, the Doctor being first, wrote, short—

Fitz. follows Flem.,

which the careful reader corrected to

Fitz follows phlegm—

in which orthography it was published next morning, to the great bewilderment of the readers, who got the paper (as in the foregoing Wilberforce case) before the absurdity was discovered and cancelled. On another occasion, the impetuous Dick Martin, of Galway, came in a passion to the editor, to complain of having been misrepresented; to which the editor replied that he could hardly think there was any thing wrong, as the reporter was one of the most faithful in the Gallery. "D— it," retorted the irate member, "do ye mane to tell me that *I spoke in italics*?" To which, as Sancho Panza says, there was no reply. One of Dick's unreported escapades may be added here, though not exactly to the question. During one of his speeches a man of cruelty to animals (for his exertions in which humane cause, by-the-by, his name is not enough honoured), there was a particular Parliamentary encouragement which did not please him. When he had finished, he walked, Galway fashion, across the floor to the quarter whence the (ironical) cheers had come, and, with immense politeness, inquired what gentleman it was who had cried "Hare, hare"? "Oh," replied a member, "it was Alderman — who cheered you on." "Pooh!" said the disappointed Dick, "only an Alderman, then can there be no more said about it," and returned quietly to his place; as he confessed to the writer of this notice in an after chat, that if he had gone farther, he never could have used another argument against Cruelty to Animals.

On quitting the Gallery the Reporters found egress by one of the passages by which Members left the House; and upon an occasion one of the former was met and accosted by a sedulous country attorney, laden with papers. "May I beg to know if you are a Member?" said he. "Not of that House," was the answer. "Oh, my Lord, I beg your Lordship's pardon," rejoined the obsequious applicant with the lowest of his possible bows. This was a neat example of the faculty for jumping at conclusions.

The House and the Gallery—or, rather, certain members pertaining to these divisions—occasionally came into collision, and dire was the strife thereof. Mr. Wyndham, at one time, had a serious dispute, in consequence of an offence given by speaking disrespectfully of reporters. But the most memorable instance of the kind was the quarrel between that body and O'Connell. O'Connell's acquaintance with the Gallery was far more intimate than that of any other honorable member. He had recommended several of his clever countrymen to morning papers for employment there; and had even scouts among the number to convey to him the information he sought. By this means he got to know who the individual was who had offended him by a report in a morning paper, and addressed a vehement denunciation against him to the editor. This led to other acts of hostility; and the consequence was (as the public may recollect) the entire Gallery tabooed him, and refused to report his speeches. Against this league the supreme Agitator struggled for a while; but the combination was too strong for him, and the damage at the time too great, to admit of his holding out; and so he cried peccavi, and peace was restored.

Within the last three years we have witnessed the phenomena of members noticing that there were strangers in the Gallery; upon which it is the bounden office of the Speaker to order them to withdraw, and the Gallery is immediately cleared. Upon these occasions very sharp debates have arisen with closed doors, the particulars of which were generally communicated to the excluded reporters by Mr. Hume and other members, friends to the press, and opposed to this ridiculous exercise of an obsolete privilege—a privilege which the country, now accustomed to a full and accurate account of Parliamentary proceedings, would not endure in the hands of any pertulant and senseless legislator. It is probable we shall never hear of it again; especially as in the last instance, we believe, the gentlemen of the press refused to return to the Gallery, when the messenger announced it was open for them, till there was a distinct vote repudiating such inconvenient and obnoxious usage. The next step in the right direction will probably be the passing

of the bill of Mr. Brotherton, the effect of which will be, that the reporters will remain in the Gallery during the divisions; and thus the whole business of Parliament will be patent to the world, without let or hindrance.

Everything of late has been tending to this desideratum; for it stands to reason that, if reporting is allowed to be done at all, it is most expedient that facilities should be afforded for having it done in the best possible manner. Towards this consummation the good sense and the good feeling of the Speaker, who continues to be always accessible to any application from the newspaper press, has largely contributed. In constructing the Gallery and its needful adjuncts in the new House, he had the condescension to invite, and consult with, a deputation from the press on the subject, and to direct every attention to be paid to their suggestions. There are now, accordingly, not only free ingress and egress at all times for reporters, and ready access to their places, but rooms provided with every convenience and comfort are appointed for their use; and refreshments are readily within reach at no other restriction but what depends on the purse. This is as it ought to be, for the respectability of the class demands the treatment due to educated gentlemen—some of whom have distinguished themselves in the Universities, others enjoy high professional degrees, and others, again, have made themselves names in the literature and intellectual pursuits of their country.

It is said, *tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis*; and, with the altered customs of the House, there have arisen altered habits among reporters. The present body is very unlike the composition of that which we have described as belonging to the earlier years of the nineteenth century. They are not compelled to lead the miscellaneous life of their predecessors; their work is before them, and they have only to go and do it—with relays every half hour, instead of an hour and a half, or two hours. There is no hanging on for hours, without knowing what resource can be found to fill the idle waste. This is a great advantage, and tends to confirm the free independence which they are fortunately able, and never slow, to assert. The character of their occupation is also considerably changed. In the olden times, the generality of the debates were given from notes, assisted, perhaps, by a few arbitrary signs, the invention of the writer, and there were very few masters of short-hand, as a science, among the whole corps. Memory and judgment were their most efficient qualifications, and by their aid very admirable reports were furnished. As the system is now carried on, short-hand is almost the only medium, and consequently the style of the reports is different. In the former case they condensed, in the latter they abbreviate by omitting the least valuable parts, whilst they give the very words of the speaker, *ipsissima verba*, for the more important points. It is, therefore more mechanical, with some advantages and some disadvantages, as compared with the best examples of the earlier period. For perfect accuracy, when a whole speech is required, the verbatim powers of the short-hand writer possess, of course, a marked superiority: for condensing the pith and meaning in ordinary matters, the elder course is not without its merits, and may often be beneficially adopted.

The reporting staff now engaged on Parliamentary proceedings far exceeds in numbers all preceding establishments. The *Times* employs, perhaps, eighteen; the *Herald* and *Chronicle* each about seventeen; the *Daily News* one or two fewer; and the *Post* and *Advertiser* each about a dozen. We approximate the numbers, and do not vouch for their strict correctness. But, some years ago, the *Evening Sun* resorted to new and spirited effort to convey the latest intelligence of the day throughout the country; and, as a portion of its plan, began to report the proceedings of Parliament to the last moment which the Post-office allowed. This system is continued; and, we believe, the *Sun* employs six or seven reporters; whilst the *Globe* and the *Standard*, following the example, for second editions, require the services of two or three for each paper.

Both as regards morning and evening journals, and several of our weekly contemporaries, the opportunities of railroad intercourse are from time to time developing the system of throwing-off publication after publication; and, what with electric telegraphs and foreign correspondents, it is not easy to foresee where the limits of reporting and the levy of reporters will end.

When we reflect upon the vast importance of the office, and how much depends on the conscientious discharge of its duties, we think we may, from our knowledge of the general body, as well as of special individuals, safely congratulate the empire on the extent of their abilities, the honour and integrity with which they perform their arduous tasks, and the manly independence with which they assert their eminent position among the practical powers of the grand engine which moves and directs the commonwealth.

THE NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

WITH our Illustrations of the Opening of the Session of Parliament, we have the gratification to present to our readers a series of Engravings illustrative of the progress of the New Palace at Westminster.

THE NORMAN PORCH.—(See Front Page.)

The Norman Porch is at the head of the Grand Staircase, and is a most exquisite bit of Gothic architecture; the rich and beautiful groins of the roof springing from clustered columns, and intersecting each other in delightful variety. The bosses at the intersections of the ribs are of marvellous richness and intricacy of character. Dwarf pedestals are placed at the clustered columns; and statues will, at some future period, add their elegant forms to the decorations of this spot. In the crown of each arched compartment is a circular opening, with a wreathed enrichment round it; and on the side walls, windows, panels, and arches are lavishly introduced; and, when stained glass adds its coloured glories to the profuse architectural embellishments, there are no parts of the New Palace at Westminster which will be more strikingly beautiful than this truly regal landing to the Grand Staircase.

ST. STEPHEN'S PORCH AND STAIRCASE.—(See page 105.)

One of the leading objects of the distinguished Architect of the New Houses of Parliament has been, in his grand design, to maintain the memory of the patronymic Saint, Stephen, indissolubly associated with the venerable site. Thus, the public approach to the Houses is by St. Stephen's Porch and St. Stephen's Hall: the latter occupying the precise site of the Chapel of St. Stephen.

The Porch of St. Stephen is at the south end of Westminster Hall; for which purpose the noble apartment has been altered, so as to form a grand vestibule of approach from the north; while another flight of steps ascends from the south-west angle of the building, nearly opposite Henry the Seventh's Chapel.

St. Stephen's Porch is one of the most pleasing features of the exterior of the entire building; being singular in composition, more varied, and piquant. It has the proportions and much of the character of the Town-hall of Louvain, supposing the projecting balconies of that fabric removed, and a sort of transept intersecting its centre, and ending on the south side, with the immense window removed from the end of the Hall. The vast opening of this window, in the centre of the new design, and the wings with more apertures, and tiers of open arches, are very effective. Looking externally, the small turrets contain a series of sculptured figures—viz., that on the left hand, and beginning at the top, Edward III., Queen Philippa, St. George, and St. Andrew; and the turret on the right, Henry VII., Elizabeth of York, St. Patrick, and St. Stephen. The four canopied niches forming the termination of the gable contain statues of four monarchs, during whose reign this and the adjoining buildings were erected, namely, William Rufus with his face towards Westminster Hall, Edward the Confessor looking towards St. Stephen's Hall and Cloisters, William IV. facing west, and Queen Victoria looking to the Victoria Tower. The Royal arms, the separate insignia of England, Ireland, and Scotland, badges, and names from the sculptured adornments of other parts of the facade.

The whole composition has a very fine effect from Poet's Corner (the only place whence its entire form can be seen); and its character of decoration combines well with Henry the Seventh's Chapel, and does not suffer by the comparison.

Ascending the noble flight of steps from Westminster Hall to the Porch, the effect of the lofty arches is exceedingly fine; the height from the pavement of the Porch to the crown of the vault is 65 feet. The great window, which is about 48 feet high in the centre, and 25 feet wide, is filled with stained glass, executed in the establishment of Mr. Hardman.

The Staircase ascending from the Old Palace Yard entrance, has a flat ceiling, divided into compartments by ribs, and supported on five arches, on each side. The bosses, panels, and decorative work, are of the most exquisite delicacy—simple in its character, yet rich and elaborate in its details. Where a neat pattern paper-hanging now fills up the space on the walls, will at some future period, be frescoes, to add the charm of colour to the charm of fine architectural proportion and outline.

ROYAL STATUES.—(See page 113.)

In the Centre Hall, and St. Stephen's Hall, is a series of sixty elaborate niches, forming enriched jambs to the main archways. These were designed by the architect to contain the various Sovereigns of England, from the Conquest to the present time; in which it has been the aim of the sculptor, Mr. John Thomas, to produce a series of Royal personages that would be interesting to the historian, antiquary, artist, and to the public. No pains have been spared to collect the best examples for the portraiture and the costumes, every minute detail having been carefully studied; and, as far as the confined and narrow niches would allow, the character of each Sovereign is admirably portrayed—the draperies are well cast; and there is a dignity and ease in the pose of each figure. The statues are executed in Caen stone, which has been slightly tinted, to harmonise with architectural portions of the interior. Amongst the most striking may be mentioned William I., Henry I., Richard I. and his Queen, King John, Eleanor, Queen of Edward I.; Edward III. and his Queen Philippa, Henry V. and Queen Katherine, Richard III., Henry VII. and his Queen Elizabeth.

During the recess thirty-six of these statues have been fixed in their places, viz.:

William I.	Henry III.	Henry V.
His Queen Matilda.	His Queen Eleanor.	His Queen Katherine.
William II.	Edward I.	Henry VI.
His Queen Matilda.	His Queen Eleanor.	His Queen Margaret.
Stephen.	Edward II.	Edward IV.
His Queen Matilda.	His Queen Isabella.	His Queen Elizabeth.
Henry II.	Henry IV.	Edward V.
His Queen Eleanor.	His Queen Joan of Navarre.	Richard III.
Richard I.	Edward III.	His Queen Anne.
His Queen Berengaria.	His Queen Philippa.	Henry VII.
John.	Richard II.	His Queen Elizabeth.
His Queen Isabella.	His Queen Anne.	

of which we have engraved, upon the preceding page, twenty-four. Hereafter, we shall engrave the remaining Statues, so as to complete the chronological series.

KEY TO THE LARGE PRINT

PRESENTED WITH THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS OF FEB. 4, 1854,
ENTITLED THE

MINISTERIAL SIDE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THIS Picture represents that side of the House of Commons occupied by the members of the present Administration and their supporters, and contains portraits of most of the members of the Government, together with those of the principal occupants of those benches, as nearly as possible in the places in which they usually sit; while, in the foreground, a characteristic indication of the front seats of the Opposition is introduced.

In order to avoid the stiffness inseparable from a pictorial representation of a number of persons sitting motionless together, the occasion of a very full House has not been chosen.

This, while it enabled the artist to break the figures into easier groups, has also the advantage of giving a representation of the ordinary aspect of the House; the cases of a crowd, filling every seat, being altogether exceptional.

The moment chosen is that when the Speaker, standing up, refers to the "orders of the day," in the printed paper of the business fixed, and calls on the member whose name stands first on the list to proceed.

At his right hand, on the bench nearest the table, extending to the division, running through the seats about the middle of the House, and called the "Gangway," sit the Ministers; while the corresponding bench on the other side is occupied by the chiefs of the Opposition.

The most prominent figure in this latter bench may, without difficulty, be recognised as Mr. Disraeli. Immediately behind him is Mr. Spooner. On the next bench, a little to the left is a back view, but an unmistakeable likeness, of Colonel Sibthorp; on whose right is Colonel Forrester. Passing to the extreme right of the foreground, the figure standing with a hat on is Sir Frederick Thesiger. Behind him, in the space at the back of the Speaker's chair, is Mr. Hayter, the Secretary to the Treasury, and "whipper-in" of the Government; and the three figures in succession behind him, represent Mr. Frederick Peel, Sir Fitzroy Kelly, and Mr. Cowan, member for Edinburgh. On the Treasury bench, next to the Speaker, with his head almost under the paper in the hand of the right hon. gentleman, sits Sir Alexander Cockburn, the Attorney-General; and next to him is Sir Richard Bethell, the Solicitor-General. The members of the Cabinet then commence in the person of Sir William Molesworth, followed by Sir Charles Wood, Sir James Graham, and Lord John Russell, who is in the seat appropriated to the leader of the House; next to him is Mr. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on whom the Speaker is apparently calling, judging from his own forward movement, as well as from the awakened attention visible in the countenance of Mr. Disraeli, who as an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, is supposed to be always on the alert, whenever his successor is in action. Besides this, Mr. James Wilson, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, is sitting out of his usual place, and is next to Mr. Gladstone, to whom he acts as a kind of adjutant in matters connected with his department. Beyond Mr. Wilson, on this occasion; though usually he occupies a place next Lord J. Russell; Mr. Cardwell, and Mr. Sidney Herbert, complete the members on the Treasury bench. On the second bench, immediately behind Mr. Cardwell, and with a paper in his hand, is Mr. Hume, in the seat which the prescriptive courtesy of the House has long assigned to him. Next him is Mr. Cobden; beyond whom, on his left, are Mr. Oliveira and Sir James Weir Hogg. On the same bench, nearer the Speaker, and just at the backs of Sir James Graham and Sir Charles Wood, is Mr. Macaulay, whose next neighbour is Mr. Bernal Osborne; while Mr. Lowe, the Secretary to the Board of Control, is the last sitter on that form. Behind Mr. Lowe is Sir George Grey; next to him, the figure reading, is Mr. Ewart; just at whose back, on the fourth bench, is Mr. Miall, who may be recognised by wearing spectacles. Next to Mr. Ewart is Mr. Peto; and in succession, on that bench, are Sir James Anderson, Mr. Dunlop, Mr. John M'Gregor (of Glasgow), Lord Seymour, and Mr. William Williams, the member for Lambeth. On the fourth bench, just over Mr. M'Gregor, is Mr. William Arthur Wilkinson, the new member for Lambeth; and, on his left, is Captain Scobell, member for Bath. On the last seat under the Gallery, next to the fourth pillar, is a somewhat dimly-indicated representation of Mr. Thomas Duncombe; on whose right is a figure standing, which, by the peculiarity of the fashion of wearing the hair, will be recognised as Mr. W. J. Fox, member for Oldham. In passing on to the left of the picture, the eye is naturally caught by the personage who is rendered prominent by his beard, and it is hardly necessary to say that it is an accurate likeness of Mr. Muntz, member for Birmingham, who is at present the only representative of the "bearded" interest in the House. In front of him, looking somewhat bald, is Sir John Shelley, member for Westminster. Next but one to him, is Mr. Milner Gibson. Before Sir John Shelley, on the second bench, sits Mr. Craufurd; next to whom, leaning eagerly forward, with his hat on, is Mr. Bright; on whose right is Mr. Blackett, member for Newcastle-on-Tyne. In the corner seat of the bench on the floor, with a paper in his hand, is represented Sir Robert Inglis. That seat has been, by custom and the good feeling of the House, always reserved for one of its oldest and most respected members. In the present session, however, it will be vacant, at one of the first acts of the House on the meeting of Parliament was the moving for a new writ for the University of Oxford, the Honourable Baronet having resigned his seat. The immediate neighbour of Sir R. Inglis is Mr. Henry Drummond, Member for West Surrey; the next seat is filled by Mr. J. G. Phillimore; and the figure next but one to him, with the hands on the knees, is intended for Mr. Phinn, one of the members for Bath. The person standing at the Bar is Mr. C. Forster, member for Walsall. The remainder of the figures, do not possess sufficient individuality to require designation.

It may be added that, as regards the three Clerks at the table, the figure on the right hand of the Speaker, with the head turned away, represents Sir Denis Le Marchant, the Chief Clerk; and the other two are the Messrs. H. and W. Ley, the Assistant Clerks. All the accessories of the House—such as the table, with its litter of books, papers, and boxes; the Speaker's chair; the Gallery; and the ornamentation of the House, are given with the strictest accuracy. The painted windows are not seen, as the Sketch is supposed to be taken after the House is lighted, when they are covered by crimson velvet curtains. Their presence, however, is indicated by the partial withdrawal of one of the curtains in the centre of the picture. A specimen of the ornamental trellis-work at the back of the two end Galleries is given, at the top of the extreme right of the picture.

The accompanying Picture has been drawn by Mr. George Thomas; the architectural portion being by Mr. T. R. Macquoid; the whole engraved by Mr. William Thomas.

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